

THE  
SHADOW  
OF  
HAMPTON  
MEAD

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BY  
MRS E VAN LOON

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THE  
SHADOW OF HAMPTON MEAD.

BY

MRS. ELIZABETH VAN LOON.

Author of "A Heart Twice Won."

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*"The Shadow of Hampton Mead" is the story of three families, two of which are American, and the varying fortunes of each and all of these are related with a force and freshness which may startle, but must please. Hampton Mead, a plantation in North Carolina, is described with a great deal of personal liking and pride, its principal features being placed before the reader with a painter's skill and a poet's feeling. The story opens in this country, and when well developed, is transferred to England, where, in full contrast, life-passages and love-passages are presented—not in London alone, but in an Earl's palatial home in Lancashire, and in an ocean-washed castle on the rocky coast of Cornwall. There is infinite variety in the plot as well as in the characters, and the wind-up of this romantic tale, in which the "wrong is made right," dispenses poetical justice to all, with retributive punishment to the wrong-doers.*

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1878.

TO  
GEN. WADE HAMPTON,  
OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA,  
I  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK,  
THE  
*Shadow of Hampton Mead.*

THE AUTHOR.



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THE  
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BY THE AUTHOR OF

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CHAPTER I.

THE MOUNTAIN HOME.

A LOVELY May morning in the mountainous regions of North Carolina. How grand, how beautiful! a picture worthy of an artist's pencil or a poet's dream! The majestic, towering mountains clothed in all their royal splendor. Ah! how grand was the scene!

How strange it is that people will leave unexplored the beautiful scenery of our beloved America, and brave the perils of the ocean, to wander through the old world, in quest of the beauties of nature, leaving behind them some of

the grandest scenery in the universe, only to return at length weary and dissatisfied. They have visited the old ruins of England, Ireland, and Scotland; they have beheld the day-god as he vanished from sight, kissing with his rosy lips the far-famed Bay of Naples, flecking its bosom with tints of gold and azure; they have stood upon the shores of Lake Como, have seen the Alps, Vesuvius belching forth her streams of lava and fire, and the richly cultivated shores of the Rhine, little dreaming of what they have missed in their own land by never having seen the grand and glorious scenery of the southwestern portion of North Carolina.

'Tis true the traveller finds much to interest him in art, in making the tour of the old world, but tell us where he will find, where the Creator has bestowed so much beauty in one small compass, as was visible to the beholder looking upon Hampton Mead, where the scene of our story opens.

Hampton Mead was built in the year 1790, by

a wealthy young Englishman, bearing the name of Hampton. He was the last of his race, and believed in a free government. In 1789 he landed in Norfolk, Virginia, with vast wealth, and immediately set about seeking for a locality in which to build himself a home. With a faithful servant he set out on horseback to explore the mountainous regions of Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. One afternoon, after a hard morning's ride, Mr. Hampton and his servant halted on the banks of a clear mountain river. On each side, for half a mile, the ground gradually sloped from the base of the mountain to the water's edge, which was as clear as crystal. Mr. Hampton could see fish sporting in and out from between the rocks. After having gazed for some time into its clear, limpid depths and watched their meanderings, he suddenly raised his head and cast his eyes over the beautiful landscape which lay stretched out before him, and they kindled with rapt delight: then turning to his servant, said:

“Wilkes, we will go no further; here I will pitch my tent.”

In the course of a few days, he was the possessor of several thousand acres of land. Ere many weeks had passed, he had several men at work getting out stone with which to build the Mead, as he proposed calling it. This was in 1789, and in one year's time the building was completed. Mr. Hampton was twenty-eight years of age at this time, and for the first time in his life thought he would like to have a wife. A year later, in Wilmington, he found one of rare beauty and culture, and transplanted her to his new home. But his wedded bliss was of short duration, for she only lived long enough to give him two children, Walter and Norva, and then passed away like a beautiful dream.

Her sweet memory was buried deep in the heart of her devoted husband; 'twas the shrine at which he worshipped, so much so, that he never found another to occupy her place, and he dedicated his life to his children and his home.

When Walter and Norva were twelve and ten years of age, he took them to Philadelphia, and placed them at school, where they remained for eight years; at the expiration of which time Mr. Hampton sailed with them for Europe. They were absent nearly two years, and when they returned to the Mead, Walter Hampton was twenty-one years of age, and Norva nineteen.

Walter was as noble a specimen of manhood as you could wish to see: tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, and well-developed—with keen, sparkling blue eyes and a profusion of sunny brown hair. His sister was just his opposite in complexion. She was above the medium height, and as graceful as a fawn; with masses of blue-black hair crowning her classic head, and pure white brow with its delicately penciled eyebrows of inky blackness, beneath which a pair of soft, tender, black eyes shone out, fringed with long, jetty lashes, which swept her dark and beautiful cheeks like pensive shadows. Mr. Hampton almost worshipped his daughter, for whenever he looked upon her beau-

tiful face he saw the image of his lost wife, who had passed away so soon. Never was a daughter more fond of a father than Norva Hampton. Walter was also very much attached to his father. With his son, Mr. Hampton was gently firm in any course he marked out for him; and in the end Walter usually gave in. There was a time coming when Mr. Hampton would find that Walter had inherited all his father's decision of character and strength of purpose. On their way from Europe Walter had asked his father to allow him to remain in New York, or some other city, for a time; but Mr. Hampton did not wish to return to the Mead leaving his son behind.

Now we find them at the Mead, anticipating the arrival of a guest, Mr. Lawrence Hastings, from London, who had met Norva the year before while in that great metropolis; and the soft warm tints of the blush rose come and go on the dark olive cheeks of the beautiful girl when she thinks of the expected result of this visit. When the Christmas holidays shall come,

she will be Lawrence Hastings' wife; but she is not to leave her father and her brother. Walter and Norva were very strongly attached to each other (something quite rare in those degenerate days), and when he suffered himself to think of her approaching marriage a shudder passed over him. But she seemed to be so supremely happy, as also her father, that he said but little on the subject after he had once fully expressed himself; and, on this evening, when Mr. Hastings is expected to put in an appearance at the Mead, his fine, noble features are contracted as with pain. He does not like his prospective brother-in-law, and feels that a shadow will rest like a dark pall over Hampton Mead when once Mr. Hastings enters its walls.

## CHAPTER II.

LAWRENCE HASTINGS.

PEACEFULLY flowed the waters of the mountain river; and the richly-tinted forest leaves glowed in the dying rays of the sun.

How grand and imposing Hampton Mead looked, with the majestic mountains for a background, and all nature bathed in the brilliant hazy light of the autumn sun, which was fast declining, and as it sank to rest, gilding the mountain tops with the halo of a dying day—a day that was about to step from *time* into eternity.

As we have remarked before, the house was built of stone; the building was two stories in height, with a wide hall running through its length, above and below. The rooms were large, high, and airy. We care not so much to describe an old house, as we do the well-kept grounds, although old houses usually have a strange



fascination about them to the lovers of antiquity, that the most elegant modern palace does not possess.

The Mead stood in the centre of a large park or lawn, dotted with gigantic oak, beech and chestnut trees. These kings of the forest had been topped and trimmed until they were nearly of one height; and viewing them from the side of the mountain had the appearance of a beautiful green plain.

The under branches were trimmed to a considerable distance, giving a chance for small growths, such as evergreens of almost every description and variety, and rare flowering shrubs. The sward was smooth as a floor, and looked like a vast emerald sea clothed in their beautiful verdure. To the left of the house, some two hundred yards, was a beautiful artificial lake, from whose silver bosom rose several little islands thickly planted with evergreens and flowers. Upon its cool and placid waters pleasure-boats were rocking to and fro, gently swayed by the soft breeze. This lake was fed by means of pipes,

leading from a cold welling spring from out the mountain side; and by the same means the beautiful fountains threw up their silver sprays far into the air, shooting forth their splendor as they fell into the great basins hewn from the veined marble which was found in abundance near by. The grounds were most artistically laid out in wide drives, and spacious walks covered with gravel almost as white as snow, and bordered with different kinds of small shrubs; interspersed irregularly were many handsome pieces of rare and costly statuary, and also several summer-houses, which added greatly to the effect. All this had cost Mr. Hampton not only a large amount of money, but a great deal of time, patience and labor.

Just as the last rays of the sun were smiling a farewell to the day, kissing the mountain tops, softly gilding the tree-tops and casting golden shadows on the clear waters as if loth to sink to rest until another day, a large travelling carriage entered the avenue and rolled slowly along the

wide drive, up to the front entrance of the mansion. The black coachman alighted and opened the carriage door; and a young man of five and twenty summers stepped from the carriage.

He was tall and well-proportioned, with auburn hair, and beard almost red, light blue eyes, and a clear, healthy complexion. The stern, even cruel expression of the mouth was hidden by a heavy moustache. As he raised his eyes to the entrance he beheld Norva Hampton, whose black eyes and crimsoned cheeks spoke a happy and cordial welcome to the traveller. The young man sprang nimbly up the marble steps, and attempted to take Norva in his arms; but she drew back, and said, while she held out her fair, jewelled hand:

“Mr. Hastings, I am most happy to welcome you to America, and to my mountain home.”

“Many thanks, my lovely queen,” said Lawrence Hastings, bending gracefully and kissing the delicate hand of his betrothed wife.

He had never dared to venture to press her

lips. She loved him with all the strength and fervor of her pure, sweet soul; but could allow no man to take the liberty of pressing his lips to hers, save her father and brother.

At this moment both made their appearance. Mr. Hampton expressed his pleasure at seeing his guest, and bade him a hearty welcome; while Walter bowed coldly, and said:

“He hoped Mr. Hastings had had a pleasant journey.”

Their eyes met. Those of Hastings emitted gleams of triumph; and the reddish blonde-moustached lip was wreathed with a defiant smile. Not a muscle of Walter's face gave token of his feelings. It still wore that cold, stern expression, and the dark blue eyes looked almost black. Norva and her father could not help noticing this coldness on the part of Walter, and this was the only shadow in the sky of Norva's happiness. She could not understand why it was that her brother treated her lover with such cold and utter indifference. He belonged to a good

family, was well educated, was fascinating in his manners, and exceedingly handsome. What more could Walter desire in his sister's husband? Norva consoled herself by thinking it was one of those unaccountable prejudices that often arise in the mind, and would wear away after they had become better acquainted. Could Norva Hampton have read Lawrence Hastings' character as did her brother, her fond and trusting heart would have grown faint with disappointment and died within her. She did not; and when she again looked into the eyes, that such a short time ago had gazed into her brother's with so much defiance, she was fascinated with their strange and beautiful, but powerful expression.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE WOOD NYMPH.

IT is not our intention to give an analysis of Mr. Hastings' character at present, but let the following pages reveal the leading traits of a low, cunning nature. After he had been at the Mead for a few days, he and Walter took their fowling-pieces and went upon the mountains for a hunt. Deer were very plentiful in those days, and both of the young men were fond of the sport. Distant from the Mead some two miles, on the side of the mountain, stood an old log-cabin. It was erected by a trapper when Walter was a child. During Walter's stay in Philadelphia the trapper had died, and the cabin had had no other tenant since, until two weeks before the arrival of Hastings. Walter had heard the negroes talking of a half-breed Cherokee Indian woman, named Hester Spotswood, and her grand-

child, having taken possession of the cabin; but he had never seen them. So on this day he made up his mind to go by the cabin, and get a glimpse, if possible, of their new neighbors.

As he and his companion drew near the cabin their attention was attracted to a strange, beautiful sight. About fifty yards from the cabin was a clear spring, bubbling out from between two large rocks: this water, so cool, pure and refreshing, went dancing down the mountain side, and over the rocks in merry, rippling cascades, and met and joined the clear waters of the river a mile below. Seated on a rock, so she could look down into the water at her feet, sat a young girl of fifteen summers. She was bare-headed, and clothed in coarse, but neat, attire; a wreath, artistically arranged, of richly-tinted autumn leaves, rested on her golden hair, which fell in beautiful long curls over her neck and shoulders. She was gazing in the water at the reflection of her own beautiful face, and after a time broke into a soft, silvery laugh. The notes were so soft, thrilling

and sweet, it reminded the two young men, who stood looking at her, and listening to her, of sweet-voiced music, which out-rivalled in its purity the grand carillon of bells in the Tower of Les Halles, at Bruges. Soon she raised her eyes from the water, and the young gentlemen had a good view of the delicate contour of her fair, sweet face. Almost the instant she raised her head she encountered the gaze of the young men, and started violently, and a painful blush suffused her face as she cast a downward glance at her small, bare feet.

“Egad! Hampton, is this the kind of game you are in quest of? If so, I admire your taste. Come, let us go and steal a kiss from those scarlet lips,” said Hastings.

“Thank you, but I am not in the habit of insulting ladies,” said Walter, coldly. “But I will go forward and speak with this young lady, and introduce myself as her neighbor,” and stepping forward, without another word to his companion, he paused a few feet from the young girl, and, lifting his hunting-cap with as much easy grace and



respect as if he had been addressing a princess, said, "I am Mr. Walter Hampton, of Hampton Mead. Pray, tell me, young lady, whom I have the honor of addressing?"

The bare-footed girl lifted her meek but expressive eyes to the gentleman's face, and said, "I am Amy Le Clare, and yonder is my home," and she pointed with her fair, tapering finger to the old log-cabin of the hunter, which Walter remembered so well.

By this time Lawrence Hastings had come up to the spring, and stood gazing at the radiant face of Amy Le Clare. Walter turned suddenly around and watched his companion's face. It was flushed with anticipated pleasure. He felt he had come unexpectedly on this rare vision of rustic beauty, and he felt himself privileged to take undue liberties with her; and even with Walter's eyes fixed upon him, his nature was so debased that he could not resist the temptation of saying, "Lovely nymph of the forest, where did you spring from? One kiss from those tempting lips before you go."

It needed but one glance to tell Amy Le Clare that he could not be trusted, and she sprang to Walter's side for protection, exclaiming, "Oh, Mr. Hampton, please do not let him touch me!"

Walter held out his hand, and said, "Have no fear, Miss Le Clare. Mr. Hastings is my father's guest, and the intended husband of my sister. He shall do you no harm," and as he spoke, Walter's eyes flashed scornfully at Hastings.

This had the desired effect of somewhat cooling Mr. Hastings' ardor; then, remembering himself, he lifted his cap politely, and said, "Fair lady, excuse me; I mean no harm to you."

This simple, untaught maiden of the mountains bowed, and said, in the sweetest accents, "Sir, if you are Mr. Hampton's guest, of course you could mean no harm to a little girl like me," and she looked up into Walter's face as though she wished him to stand between her and his companion, for whom she had conceived a strong dislike. She was wholly inexperienced, this fair lily, but she read, as if by intuition, the strange light that shone

from Hastings' eyes as he took in all her girlish charms, and she felt that he was a dangerous man to encounter.

Walter observed that a sudden tremor passed over her frail form, and said, "Miss Le Clare, I will see you safely home if you will permit me to do so, and I hope you will pardon our intrusion, for, I assure you, I did not dream that I should encounter you so abruptly when I led my companion by the path that leads to your home, and I now feel as if I must somehow make amends."

Amy lifted her eyes to his face, and he felt a strange, sweet thrill of emotion pervade his being; for, while standing there, he had had time to study every graceful motion and feature of this young girl. Never before had his eyes rested on so fair a picture. She was of medium height, with a form in perfect harmony with the sweet expression of her face. The head was well shaped, and crowned with a wealth of golden hair, combed back from her fair, young brow. The eyes were large, soft, and expressive, with long lashes, and delicately-

penciled brows. The face was oval in shape; the nose slightly aquiline; the mouth was perfect, reminding one of a sweet rose-bud, and as she smiled the scarlet lips parted, half displaying the small, pearly teeth that gleamed between them. Walter, towering above her, looked down into that strange and beautiful face, and his fate was sealed.

Without so much as addressing a word to Hastings, he started in the direction of Amy's abode. As he wandered out to the old cabin he was astonished at the purity and sweetness of Amy's language; though her garb was so plain and humble, she conversed with easy grace and natural eloquence. She had read Shakespeare, Moore, Scott, and all the leading poets. She seemed to be conversant with history, geography and science. Walter was interested. He felt that the trapper's old cabin held a mystery which he would take pleasure in unravelling.

He saw the fair girl-woman safe to the home that sheltered her, and then turned and walked slowly back to his companion.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A FATHER'S DARLING.

THE early autumn air was chilly in the mountainous region as night approached, and Norva Hampton sat in her room with a blazing pile of hickory wood piled upon the hearth. She had left the drawing-room for the night and repaired to her own rooms, on the opposite side of the hall from her father's. Her apartments were fitted up with every luxury that money could procure. Pictures of great value adorned the walls, while well-chosen subjects of statuary filled niches built for their reception. This private sitting-room of this worshipped daughter of her father's heart was furnished with perfect harmony and comfort.

Heavy crimson, silken curtains, fell in graceful folds before the windows, with gold trimmings. All the chairs and sofas were upholstered in the

same rich coloring. The floors were of black walnut and cedar, and were waxed and polished until almost as smooth as glass. Costly Turkish rugs were laid before the fire-places; couches and reclining-chairs were scattered about the room in profusion.

The rich wine-colored velvet dinner-dress was laid aside for a soft, clinging, white cashmere robe, which fell in easy, graceful folds around the wearer, as she reclined in her low chair, while her eyes rested dreamingly and strangely upon the hickory pile that glowed in the fire-place.

She is not alone; at her side stands an elderly negro woman combing and brushing out her silky locks with a hand of loving servitude. This attendant was a character in her way. She was "Mammy Silvia," the foster-mother to Walter and Norva Hampton.

Sleep never sealed her eyelids at night without her visiting the rooms of her children, as she was wont to call them. She insisted upon brushing Miss Norva's hair after her own maid had retired,

and seeing her safe in bed. After this labor of love was accomplished, she must go to Master Walter's room, to see that he was not sleeping in a draft; and make sure that all was well with him. When this was done she could lay her head down for sleep. But to-night there is a strange feeling of unrest in Mammy Silvia's heart, and as she looks on her beloved young mistress, a deep-drawn sigh escapes her.

Norva heard the sigh, and quickly said:

“What troubles you, Mammy Silvia?”

“Oh, chile, my old heart is filled wid many misgivings on your account. I fear you is not agwine to be happy when you is Mrs. Hastings, as you are as Miss Norva Hampton. Now 'scuse me, chile, but I don't tink Mr. Hastings would make you as happy as Massa Clieffe Wilbbern could, and I is very sorry you 'fused him.”

“But, Mammy Silvia, you know Cliffe Wilbbern is the son of my dear mother's brother. You would not wish to see me the wife of my cousin? And now, Mammy, remember, Mr. Hastings is the

man I have chosen; and if you wish to see me happy, and I feel that you do, never speak unkindly of him."

"No, indeed, chile, I never will speak dis-spec'ful of anybody. You knows, honey, it is not my nater; for I has as much family pride as de Hastings or de Hamptons, an' when dis young wiper in sheep's clothing gets a foot-hold on dis plantation, I will do all in my power to shield his sins from de eyes ob you an' de world; for I feel he is sent here to do his master's work. An' when Mr. Hastings is near me, I almost 'magine I can see de cloven foot ob de debil, an' hear de rattlin' ob his chains."

"Mammy!" and the voice rang out cold and sharp. "Mammy Silvia, if those words came from any one else but you, I should order her from my presence at once; and if you still persist in your disrespectful language, I shall feel in duty bound to do so any way."

"Dar, Miss Norva, chile, may de good Lord forgib me, an' de debil fly away wid Mr. Lawrence



Hastings. But as I had afore told you, honey, I never speaks dis'spec'ful of any one; an' to you, my angel lamb, least ob all de rest ob mankind. But I is not blind: I can see as far through a grindstone as de man dat bored de hole in it, an' when your blessed mudder died, an' gib you a little tiny baby in my arms, an' said: 'Silvia, be kind to my little Norva when I is gone; watch ober her and shield her from all harm,' I said in my heart, 'Yes, dear mistress, I will.' An' you knows, honey, I has always been kind to you an' Massa Walter; an' when I see dis angel of darkness a tempting ob you, I feel I is doin' my 'vine Master's work to speak out an' say, 'Miss Norva, honey, for de lub of heaven, turn your back on temptation an' de debil: for he is in dis house, honey; here at de Mead. An' de bridal dress, an' de orange wreaf, an' de veil is all ready for de debil to claim my young mistress as his bride.'

Norva arose to her feet, and pushed the heavy masses of black hair back from her pale, sweet face, and pointed to the door: "Leave me,

Mammy Silvia, or I shall ring and inform my father of the disrespect you have shown me this evening. There, not another word," she said, as she saw Silvia opening her mouth to speak.

A sorrowful expression settled on the face of old Silvia, and she left the room without a word. When she reached the hall and closed her mistress' door gently, she rolled up her eyes, and said :

"O Lord, Master in hebbin, what does all dis mean? I have been ordered from de face of my chile; an' now I knows de debil am in dis house sartin. I wonder if I was to kill de debil, if I couldn't rebalutionize de world ob some ob its wickedness, and if when I dies, Massa Walter wouldn't change my name, and put Becky at de fountain, ober me, and call me 'Joe an' de ark?' I is agwine to his room an' ax him now." And she went and knocked softly at Walter's door: but he was not there to bid her come in. So the devil was not disposed of that night. In fact, dear reader, he still roams at large, "seeking whom he may destroy."

## CHAPTER V.

## WALTER'S LOVE.

WHERE was Walter Hampton, that he was not in his room at ten o'clock in the evening? Come with us to the hunter's cabin upon the mountain side, and there you will find him. It was September, when he first met sweet Amy Le Clare; now it was November, and many times had his feet wandered over the mountain path which led to his idol's home. Those visits were made without his father's knowledge; for well he knew that father's pride, and he had asked himself more than once, how those visits would terminate. Of one thing he was certain, and that was, he loved this fair, sweet, brown-eyed girl with all the fervor and passion of his soul; and on this night as he watched the slender, graceful girl, as she walks back and forth at her spinning-wheel, drawing out the soft even thread,

that is to be dyed and woven into cloth, it is very hard for him to refrain from asking her to be his wife. He looks at Hester Spotswood, the grand-parent of his darling, and is struck with the contour of her face. She is not yet fifty, and remarkably comely and graceful, tall and straight as an arrow, with large, soft, luminous eyes; with heavy masses of hair of midnight blackness, crowning a fine and well-shaped head. Her skin was dark, but very pure, and the mouth was a marvel of chiselled beauty.

She, too, sat at a spinning-wheel—for Hester earned the bread that fed Amy and herself, by spinning and weaving for the different families in and around the Mead. During the many times Walter had visited Mrs. Spotswood he had learned many things to interest him. He learned that Hester Boone had been well raised. Her mother had been a handsome Cherokee; and her father an Englishman of some means, and a man of letters. Before she was fifteen years of age she left her parents' protection, and eloped with a

young man by the name of Spotswood. The fruit of this marriage was a fair, sweet daughter; to whom she gave the sweet name of Amy. When this child was ten years old Mr. Spotswood died, and left her very poor. At that time she was living in Norfolk, Virginia. She was too proud to appeal to her father for forgiveness, and undertook to earn a support for herself and daughter by making bead ornaments and peddling them through the streets and on board of ships. By this piece of industry she got along very well, until Amy, her daughter, was fourteen years of age. One day, not feeling able herself to go out with her ornaments, she permitted her daughter to go. When Hester came to this part of her story a strange light gleamed from her eyes, and her voice was low, deep and full of pent-up passion, her fingers dropped her thread, and her foot ceased to turn the wheel. She continued: "My Amy did not come home to me that night, nor the next day, nor the next, nor the next week, and time flew by until the moon had waxed

and waned twelve times. Then when my heart was nearly broken, and I had given up all hopes of ever looking into her starry eyes again, she came to me one cold winter's night, when the earth lay deeply wrapt in snow, and the fleecy white flakes were still falling: but oh, how changed she was! She looked like one from the spirit land, with her mournful eyes, and her thin, pale face. She laid a little golden-haired girl of six weeks in my lap; the voice was very faint and weary, as she said: 'Mother, this is my child; we will call her Amy Le Clare. I married her father the day you sent me out to peddle. I had met him often before without your knowledge. Mother, *I say, I married Mr. Le Clare*; at least a man I took to be a minister read the marriage ceremony and pronounced us man and wife. My husband took me to Richmond, and he remained with me until just before the birth of my child. One morning, getting up later than usual, I found him gone, with a note lying on my pillow.

"I took the note and read. It told my mis-

guided child to return to me: that Le Clare was not his name, and that she was not his wife. He had accomplished her ruin—that was all he wanted. He left her, he said, to claim a wealthy bride. She need never try to find him; for when she read these lines he would be on his way to the ocean, which he would cross to gain his wife. I learned through my child that this man was not young, was pleasing in his manners, and very fascinating. My daughter lived to see the warm spring-time come, with its soft, gentle south winds laden with the perfume of flowers, and with her destroyer's name on her lips, she left me in my great sorrow. By her cold, still form I fell upon my knees, and cried aloud to Almighty God to assist me in finding this man, and avenging my Amy's wrongs. Since her death I have wandered from place to place, spinning and weaving, or doing whatever I could get to do. At length I wandered to this neighborhood. I can hardly tell what brought me here; but I have conceived the idea that here I will meet my deadly enemy.

Woe unto him, when he stands face to face with Hester Spotswood."

By this time Amy had finished her evening task; she took her broach from the spindle and laid it in a large basket in one corner of the room, came back softly, set the wheel back from the fire, and took a low stool at her grandmother's feet.

Walter Hampton's face expressed a strange, deep interest in Hester's story; and after she ceased speaking and commenced to rock her body to and fro, he said, "Mrs. Spotswood, give up this strange, mad dream of revenge. Think that your daughter's wrongs will cry out against this man in the last day, when all hearts are judged, and remember that 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord.'"

"Never! The blood of the noble Cherokee is thick in my veins. I cannot forego my revenge. The thoughts of that, when it shall come, sweeten all other trials and sorrows. I know that when I am done with that man he will be judged by



Him who cares even for the little sparrows, and who feeds the young ravens. If a man transgress the laws of the land, he is tried and condemned according to the heinousness of his crime. I could not bring this man to a court of justice; but when I find him, I will be judge and juror, and the decision I arrive at shall be faithfully carried out to the letter."

Amy looked softly up into her grandmother's face, and laid her hands on her knee. Hester looked down on Amy's lovely face. All at once she rose to her feet, and, looking in Walter's face, said, "Mr. Hampton, what brings you to the hunter's cabin so often?"

Walter's face paled with these eyes keenly fixed upon him, and then it flushed, as he said, "Mrs. Spotswood, I think you know why I come here—Miss Le Clare is very beautiful, and I love her. Have I your permission to claim her at some not very distant day as my wife?"

A low, mocking laugh broke from the half-breed's lips. "There, Mr. Hampton, is the door.

I had forgotten that Amy was no longer a child. Go, sir, and never enter this house again."

Walter thought it best to leave when he saw Hester was so terribly excited. He lifted his hat courteously, bowed good-night, and went slowly back to the Mead. It was nearly a week before he ventured to go to the cabin again, and then he found it empty. Hester Spotswood and her golden-haired granddaughter had disappeared, leaving no clue behind them.

## CHAPTER VI.

## BROTHER AND SISTER.

**T**HE snow was piled high upon the mountains, and glittered in the valley below them. The December morning air was keen and sharp. Hampton Mead looked very beautiful and grand to Walter and Norva as they left the mansion for a morning stroll down by the river. Scarcely a day ever passed without their taking a long ramble, if the weather permitted; and they usually found something new to admire in the beautiful scenery around them. In this, their last happy morning walk, at least happy to Norva, the brother and sister exchanged confidence in regard to their future. Walter told his sister of sweet Amy Le Clare, and of his love for her, and of his father's threat to disinherit him if he did not dismiss her from his thoughts; "and that, dear sister, is impossible while the light of reason, with

which God has endowed me, is left to me. My father has never seen this lovely girl, and cannot understand how I can love a girl with the dark blood of the Cherokees flowing in her veins. He called her a dark savage of the forest, who had bewitched me, when I asked his consent to bring her to the Mead as my wife. And now I want you to use your influence with him in my behalf. Norva, I wish you could see and know Amy Le Clare. She is as fair as a lily, with a superior mind, and a holy innocence shining from a pure and spotless soul."

Norva raised her black eyes to her brother's, and said, "Darling brother, I am sorry for you, who are so young, but you know our father's firmness of character; if he has set his heart against this, you might as soon attempt to transform this clear water at our feet into a sea of blood as to expect to change his mind upon the subject. Nevertheless, I will plead with him in your behalf, and, after next week, I will persuade Mr. Hastings also to use his influence with father in

your favor. He seems to have a strong influence over father, and perhaps after I am married, and he sees how very happy I am, he will the more readily give his consent to your union with this 'fair lily,' as you call her."

"Ah! I fear not," said Walter, sadly, "for father informed me last night he wished me to marry Octavia Stanley, Mr. Lawrence Hastings' step-sister, a lady whom I have never seen; but father says she is very lovely. If she were endowed with the grace and beauty of a Hebe, and the purity of an angel, she could never fill the place in my heart that Amy Le Clare holds. She is the guiding star of my future life. She is enshrined in my heart, and possesses every sweet and lovely attribute that belongs to woman. You spoke of 'after next week;' that is, after you have become Mr. Hastings' wife. Oh, sweet sister, is there nothing I can do or say to prevent this marriage? It is for your future happiness I wish to prevent it. It is not worldly position, but it is Mr. Hastings' utter lack of soul, and when it is too late,

my darling sister, you may awake to this fact. I want to see you happy. I would almost lay down my life to make you so. Say," taking her hands in his own, "say, can nothing prevent this marriage?"

"Nothing but death," said Norva, coldly.

Walter's very lips turned pale when he looked upon her face and beheld the determined light in her eyes.

When Norva saw her brother's face pale, she said, "Brother, you ask me to plead your cause with our father, and in almost the same breath you ask me to give up Mr. Hastings. Is this generous? I know, Walter, you wish very much to see me happy; but now, let me ask you a question: if I will give up Mr. Hastings, will you promise never to seek Amy Le Clare again?"

Walter sank down on the trunk of a fallen tree and buried his face in his hands. He remained in this attitude for some time, and when he lifted his head, Norva saw that in those few moments a terrible wave of anguish had swept over his soul, and

the voice was low and hoarse which answered her:

“Yes, sweet sister, for your sake I will give up the darling dream of my life, and live alone for you, if you will promise not to marry Lawrence Hastings.”

Nora looked on her brother Walter in a pitying kind of manner, and said :

“Brother, I know you think in doing this, it is for my good; but I will not tax your generosity to the extent of asking you to give up Miss Le Clare, and sending Mr. Hastings back to London without me. But I will pay you this compliment for your proffered, noble sacrifice of love, and say: I would do it more readily for you than any other being on earth, not even my dear father excepted. I cannot give Mr. Hastings up. He is a part of my being, and my heart is his for weal or woe. And now, dear brother, let us lay aside our hopes and aspirations for the life that lies before us: on this lovely morning try to prepare our minds to appreciate and enjoy this beautiful

panorama painted by the hand of our Divine Creator. Oh, brother, cast your eyes aloft to the jeweled heads of the 'twins;' are they not grand? are they not sublime?"

When Norva called her brother's attention to one of the fairest landscapes man's eyes ever rested upon, her beautiful olive cheeks glowed, and a tender, dewy moisture gathered in her eyes. She saw the wisdom, goodness, and greatness of God in all His works. She loved and revered the humblest of His creation, and when her soul-lit eyes rested upon the scene, she bowed her head, clasped her hands, and exclaimed, "O Father, I acknowledge Thee, the Creator of this grand and noble universe. The hand and genius of man is as nothing, when compared with Thy power and skill!"

Walter lifted his head, and a tinge of rapt delight overspread his face, and for a brief space all else was forgotten.

Reader, there are many whose eyes have never rested upon a mountain, and those who have



never been fortunate to do so, can hardly comprehend the grandeur and beauty of the scene upon which Walter Hampton's eyes rested when he raised his head at his sister's bidding. Immediately before him, and the first thing that met his appreciative gaze, was a clear mountain river, whose waters, for purity in color, rivalled the glittering sapphire. At the point Norva had called him to look upon, were what is known as the "twins," a spot where the river forces its way through the rocks, which tower above it for some two hundred feet. These rocks are perpendicular, with a surface as white as snow. At the top they are crowned with rich, dark evergreens, whose branches sway as though they longed to dip their emerald arms in the limpid waters so far below them. The dark-green boughs were slightly sprinkled with snow that morning, which, with the bright rays of the December sun casting its pale golden glimmer over all, added new beauty to the face of the lovely landscape.

After gazing at this enchanting scene for some

time, Norva said: "Walter, it is time we were returning to the Mead, and that I was dressing to meet our expected guests, who are expected to arrive to-day from Wilmington."

At this announcement a painful sigh escaped Walter, for it brought his thoughts back to the stern realities of life; and at the present time the realities were anything but pleasing to his mind.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A DARK BEAUTY.

**I**T was near the luncheon hour when Walter and Norva returned to the Mead. A commodious travelling carriage was just driving around to the stables. There had been an arrival. Could it be the guests, expected from Wilmington—the elder Mr. Hastings and his step-daughter?

Just as they reached the marble steps, they were met by Mr. Lawrence Hastings, whose eyes grew soft and tender, for he was looking into Norva's tender, soulful ones. He held out both hands to her, and said, "My darling, congratulate me: my father and sister have arrived."

Just then a strain of low, sweet laughter fell upon their ears from the reception-room; a strange feeling came over Norva, but she put her hands into Mr. Hastings' extended ones, and said:

"I am very glad your relatives have arrived

I feared this heavy fall of snow would have prevented them from reaching the Mead for some days. Excuse me now, Lawrence, for I must make myself presentable to appear before your father and sister," and a faint blush dyed her face.

"First meet my sister, who utterly refuses to go to her room until she has seen you," said Mr. Hastings, leading her to the door of the reception-room; "you need make no changes in your dress to add to your loveliness."

There was no alternative, and Norva looked down at her walking-dress, and said, "Miss Stanley will think me devoid of due respect to her, if I appear before her in this garb, but I wish to please you above all things."

Mr. Hastings lifted her hand to his lips, and said: "Thanks, my darling; how happy I shall be when the time comes, when you will permit me to treat your lips thus."

This remark called a blush to her face, which burned there until she stood before Miss Stanley, and felt the small snow-flake of a hand in hers,

and heard the low, soft, musical voice ringing in her ears. When Norva raised her eyes, she was startled and dazzled at the apparition before her. A form petite, graceful, and willowy; dark, rich glowing complexion; soft, silky black hair, clustering in soft waves over a low, broad brow, as smooth as marble; large, full, sparkling black Spanish eyes; a small rose-bud mouth, with glittering white teeth, which showed to good advantage when those perfectly chiselled lips were wreathed in smiles, such as played over this lovely face now. All Norva Hampton could do was to gaze enchanted, with that soft, fair hand, still in hers. It might truly be compared to a snow-flake, for it was as cold as an icicle; but when those scarlet lips were pressed to hers, Norva, in a measure, regained her self-composure, for a cold feeling came over her; and this gentle, dignified birdling of the mountain met this London lady with easy, quiet dignity and grace. The first dazzling effect had passed off, and she could question her of her journey with ease.

Lawrence looked on the two young girls, and a strange light gleamed from his eyes: one he called his sister, and the other was his betrothed wife. In four days he would stand with her at the altar, and take upon himself vows to love, honor, and cherish her till death should separate them. She would then be all his own. What was to become of this radiant girl he called his sister? He watched her narrowly, but her countenance was as calm and serene as a May morning.

At this juncture Aunt Louise, the house-keeper, appeared at the door for the third time, to show Miss Stanley to her room. This young lady arose, kissing her hand to Norva, flashed one keen, long look at Mr. Hastings, and departed.

After she was gone Mr. Hastings seemed to be deeply preoccupied for some time. The voice of his betrothed at length recalled him to himself, as she said, "Mr. Hastings, if you will excuse me I will go to my room, and prepare to meet your father at luncheon."

An hour later they all assembled in the dining-room; not the grand dining-salon, however, nor

the snug, cozy one where Mr. Hampton had dined alone, or with his children since the Mead was built, and which was a favorite with his fair, sweet wife, but in the general dining-room where a few gathered together made it very pleasant. The large dining-salon was seldom opened, except on grand occasions, such as birth-day parties or holiday festivities.

At luncheon Norva met, for the first time, her intended father-in-law. He was a man of fifty-five or thereabouts, but one would hardly have taken him to be so old; in fact he looked but little older than his son. In stature he was tall, and his hair was slightly streaked here and there with threads of silver. An habitual smile played around his finely-shaped mouth.

At this repast Walter was duly presented to the elder Mr. Hastings and his beautiful step-daughter. A feeling of aversion came over him towards the latter, and one of contempt for the former; for he saw at a glance that the son was but "a chip from off the old block," if you will pardon, dear reader, the blunt but truthful old saying.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE LOST FOUND.

EARLY one morning in January, Mr. Hampton requested Walter to go to the town of B—— on important business for him, to have some papers registered at the Court-house; and in a short time Walter was in the saddle and on his way to the lovely little town, nestled between the two ranges of mountains—that is, the Smoky, or a continuation of the Alleghanies, and the Black mountains. B—— was fifteen miles from the Mead, and looked like some fairy gem nestled in the rich valley on the banks of a beautiful river, and the great mountains rising on two sides.

As Walter drew near the town, a strange, sweet, wild hope sprang up in his heart. Perhaps he might come across Hester Spotswood, and her golden-haired granddaughter. He longed for one more look into her soft, tender eyes, as the storm-



lost mariner longs for one glimmering ray of starlight after hours of storm and darkness. Now that Norva was married and the most of her time taken up with her husband, he longed more than ever for the presence of his heart's treasure. The dark, brilliant, vivacious face of Octavia Stanley had no charms for him, greatly to the disappointment of his father, who was perfectly charmed with her. He could not see how Walter could be indifferent to her rare and glorious charms; and during the month she had been at the Mead, more than one conversation had taken place concerning her, with reference to marriage, between father and son. But Walter was true as steel to the first love of his heart.

Arriving at B——, he transacted the business he had in hand and started for home, going three miles from B—— on another road, to remain over night with a young college friend, who had just returned from Philadelphia.

The first person he saw as he rode up to the gate was Hester Spotswood, with a large roll of

cloth under her arm. She was just entering the little side gate. There was no mistaking the tall, straight, dark figure. She stepped like some queen of the forest. A strange, wild tumult of feeling came over Walter. His first thought was to call to her; then he reconsidered the matter and let her pass on. Hester did not see him, and it was well for Walter she did not; for, if she had, he would not have seen Amy.

Walter found his young friend, Charlie Field, delighted to see him. After supper, the young men repaired to the large and handsome library, to talk over bygone days in the good old Quaker City. Charlie was studying medicine now, and would return to his lectures in a few days. After a time, Walter said:

“Charlie, who was that tall, dark-looking woman that was here this evening, as I came in? Does she live here?”

“Oh, you mean Hester Spotswood, the half-breed,” replied young Field. “She lives a mile from here, just on your road. You will pass her

house to-morrow. She is a strange woman; raised in affluence, though poor now. Her father, they say, is still living and very wealthy; but she preferred this life of toil, to one of comfort by returning to her aged father, whose displeasure she incurred by her marriage. She has a granddaughter, who I think is the most beautiful girl I ever saw, and if it was not for a pair of soft, bright eyes away off in the Quaker City, I should almost be tempted to pluck this wild flower and plant it here in the garden of Cedar Vale. Miss Amy Le Clare is very well read, and father is trying to get her up a school here. He thinks it a shame for one so lovely and intelligent to live as she has to live, first one place, and then another, and working on an old spinning-wheel day after day."

Walter listened to this account of Amy's life of drudgery and his warm, tender heart filled with a fixed purpose. He thought of his father's great wealth; of the happy life of his sister, who never knew a want that was not gratified, if tender love

and money could procure it. He thought of Lawrence Hastings, who had now taken up his abode at the Mead, and poor Amy Le Clare, his heart's idol, was toiling with her delicate hands, from day to day, to keep the wolf from the door. This should not be. He would make one more appeal to his father: then, if the sanction he required were still refused, he would take his fate in his own hands. He would marry Amy, and toil for her, if needs be. The world was wide. He was young, blessed with a fine constitution, invigorated by the pure air of his native mountains, and his simple, temperate habits.

The young men talked until late in the night, and then retired. Next morning, with the bright winter's sun shining on the frosty heads of the stately cedars at the Vale, Walter bade his friend good-bye. As the little negro boy opened the big gate for him to pass out, he saw the tall form of Hester going to Cedar Vale again; and a glad, happy light beamed from his eyes, as he touched his steed lightly with his spurs, and dashed down the road in the direction of Amy's home.

## CHAPTER IX.

## UNDER THE WAVES.

AS Walter flew over the smooth gravel road, his youthful imagination painted the happy surprise Amy would feel when he stood before her. It took his swift steed but a few moments to bring him to the lonely wayside hut. There was no fence around the hut; and he rode to the door and hastily dismounted. The door was open; he glanced into the room; a bright wood-fire was burning. He could see no one. He called softly: "Amy."

There was a rustling noise in the further part of the room that was hidden by the swinging door. With a low, glad cry, Amy sprang forward and extended her hands, exclaiming: "Mr. Hampton, I am so glad to see you. Will you walk in?"

Walter waited for no second bidding, and soon

was seated on a rough stool in the little hut, which would have done credit to a palace for neatness. In one corner of this room, which was about twenty feet square, stood Hester Spotswood's loom, with a nice piece of checked linsey that she was weaving for Mrs. Fields. In another corner stood bed, with a quilt as white as snow.

A rough table with a white cover, two or three chairs, and the two spinning-wheels, were all the furniture that room contained, a few shelves excepted, upon which gleamed some quaint delft-ware, white ground and with odd figures! How destitute the place looked compared to Walter's own luxurious home a few miles away! His heart painfully swelled, as the contrast involuntarily struck him.

Holding Amy's hand, he said, "Miss Le Clare— Amy, my darling, will you give me the right to take you from this life of toil? Come with me— now—this morning, and we will go to B—— and be married. Then I will take you to a place of safety, until I can prepare my father to receive you as his daughter."

The golden head drooped, and the bright eyes were veiled, while a crimson tide surged over the fair, oval face, and the little hands trembled in Walter's own. "Mr. Hampton, I cannot leave my dear grandmother; I am the only being she has in the world to love and cling to. She says I can never marry, for she and all her descendants are cursed for her disobedience to her father."

Then a sudden thought came to her, and she said, while all the color left her beautiful face, "Do you remember what grandmother told you at the hunter's cabin near the Mead, of my poor, unfortunate young mother and of my birth? Even if my grandmother was to give her consent to this marriage, I am no fitting mate for you. Yet, oh, do not blame my darling young mother," and poor Amy's voice trembled with deep emotion.

"My darling, I do not blame her," said Walter, soothingly, as he pressed his lips to her pale cheek; "neither do I blame you, and in proof thereof, I ask you to go with me, knowing your grandmother would not consent to your marrying any one."

“But, Mr. Hampton, what would your father say if he knew my history? I have heard he is very proud. Would he consent to receive as his daughter so unfortunate a being as myself? And your proud, beautiful sister, whom I have so often gazed upon unseen, could she call poor Amy Le Clare, sister? No, no, it cannot be,” and a low, sad cry broke from her pale lips.

Walter laid one hand on her golden head, and, drawing her trembling form to him, asked, “My darling, my angel, my life, my all, how long will your grandmother be absent this morning?”

“She will be gone all day. Mrs. Fields has some work to be done at the house,” faltered Amy, as her lover kissed her sunny hair.

“Then,” said Walter, “come ride behind me. Whirlwind will take us to B—— and back again by one o’clock, and when we return you will be my wife. I will leave you here with your grandmother for a few days, and then return and bear you in triumph to Hampton Mead. Your grandmother need know nothing of the marriage until then.”



Walter was young and sanguine, and with Amy as his wife, life before him seemed like some beautiful dream. Amy was but a child, not yet sixteen. After much persuasion on his part, she consented, and in a short time they were flying towards B——.

They took a by-road, however, for Walter feared that Hester might see them. This circumstance proved disastrous to the young lovers. The clear, beautiful, winding waters of the Cane river were very deep at this point. No one ever ventured to cross it here except in the dry season, when the water was very low. Walter thought to save time in crossing here, instead of going half a mile below to Julius' ford. So when he came to the bank of the stream and looked at the sandy, pebbly bank, he never thought of danger, but struck boldly for the opposite shore. He had not gone more than fifteen feet until the noble black steed and his two riders were in water to the depth of forty feet. At once Walter was washed from the saddle, and poor Amy had her hand locked

tightly about his waist, with a cold, frozen expression of horror on her deathly face.

Walter was a good swimmer, but was now encumbered with his boots and his overcoat, and, as the current of the river was very rapid, he thought his only salvation was to hold on to Whirlwind's bridle. When he was first washed from his horse he had his right arm around the noble animal's neck; he kept it there now, and spoke to his fair companion: "Do not feel frightened; we will soon be out of this." But a shiver was her only reply, for the January winds seemed to cast a chill over her delicate form; but Walter felt the slender arms tighten around him, and this renewed his courage, and gave him new strength to battle with the swift current. Down, down they went, keeping in the middle of the stream. Whirlwind raised his head from the water once or twice and neighed softly, as much as to say, "If I cannot take you safely to the shore, my young master, we will all perish together." The animal's fine, prominent eyes expressed almost human intelligence as he battled heroically with the current.

How many thoughts passed through Walter's mind while in this perilous situation! A review of his whole life came before him, and never did the pale, frightened girl, clinging to him for life, seem so dear to him as now, with almost certain death staring them in the face. After what had seemed an age to him, Walter felt the pebbly bottom with his feet, and at the same time he felt Amy's arms loose their hold about his waist.

“Courage, my love; we are safe; here is Julius' ford! Bless my noble horse! he has battled with the current for half a mile, and brought us to the shore we were so anxious to reach.”

Poor Amy! her strength was exhausted. She thought of Walter's loved ones at home. Could he not save himself if she relinquished her hold on him? It was death anyhow; and with tender thoughts of her grandmother, and a whispered prayer for him she loved so dearly, she tore her fast-stiffening fingers apart, and sank beneath the waves.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE FIRST SHADOW.

SOME six weeks after these events, the dark, sweet, gentle face of Mrs. Lawrence Hastings wore a tinge of grief and disappointment.

It was a warm, sunshiny day in February; such as first whispers to us of the near approach of spring, when we first begin to look for the soft, meek-eyed daisies, and the golden butter-cups; and first listen to the soft chirp of the little birds calling in sweet, loving notes to their mates; when the sky begins to look blue and far away, and when the sunsets begin to assume their golden, then their orange and purple, tints.

It is evening after one of those lovely, sunny days, and Mammy Silvia enters her nursling's room. There is an expression of sadness on Silvia's face, as she says, "Why is de shadders resting on my lamb's face to-night?" The kind

old voice was touchingly tender as she laid her hand on her mistress' hair and caressed it, as she used to in the far back days when Mrs. Hastings was a little, helpless child on her knee.

Norva had been married now two months. Mr. Hastings was very devoted to her. She still loved him with an almost absorbing devotion. She had not lost confidence in him, but yet a shadow had crept into her heart, and Silvia sees it, for she has been quick to note every changing expression of that beloved face.

Again she said, "Tell Silvia what makes you look so sad, honey? Has dat young warmint been scolding Mammy's baby-lub? Tell me, chile, if he has."

"Of whom are you speaking?" said Mrs. Hastings, sternly.

"No one in particular, honey; dat is, I did not know but old massa had been scolding ob you, and I was gwine to speak to Mr. Hastings about it 'case now you 'longs to him," and Silvia rolled up the whites of her eyes, mentally exclaiming:

“Lord, forgib me for dat lie; dat white-libered debil is agwine to be de means ob sending old Silvia’s soul to torment sure enough. Now, look here, Silvia, you has got to pray, and fight de debil day and night; no going behind de stumps dis time. And, oh laws, Silvia, you has got to pray for dat young lamb, Miss Norva. What was dat her mudder say to me?—let me see,” and Silvia turned her head to one side and commenced to touch her fingers like she was counting, and said, “Yes, I ’members: ‘Watch ober my little Norva; shield her from all temptation when I am gone.’ Poor Miss Norva, poor young lamb! Since she has changed her name her feelings have changed towards poor old Mammy Silvia. De time was when I could say, Miss Norva, do so and so, or do not do so and so, an’ she would listen to me; but now if Mammy say anything she am ready to jump to de bell-pull, and call ol’ marse—at least she ’tends like she am gwine to, but she don’t scare me, chillun, I can tell you dat; an’ I is gwine to ’spress my ’pinion to my own satisfaction.

Dem fellers as tells Miss Norva an' Massa Walter dat de erf turns round on its axle-tree six times in four and two hours, can't keep me from 'spressin' my 'pinion. Dat ole Ball mountain off dar has seen many strange tings in its time, since de Lord made it an' placed de ball ob his foot on it, an' dat must be why dey call it de Ball mountain. I feels it in my ole bones now; and de time will come when my angel lamb will pray for dis same mountain to belch forth fire an' brimstone, an' destroy dis lubbly Mead an' her; an' when de fire an' brimstone is de hottest, Mammy will carry water an' put it out. Now something has gone wrong with my chile, an' Mammy has cut her eye-teeth an' will watch. I wonder what it is, anyhow? Can it be dat white-libered cat, Miss Octavia, as dey calls her?—De Lord, what a name! Well, I is'ent more than fifty, an' if I has a dozen chillun, I will nebber call one Octavia, or Lawrence either, but I will call 'em all Walter an' Norva."

After having arrived at this decision, Mammy

Silvia turned to her young mistress, and said: "It is time, my dear young mistress, you were taking your evening walk. You must not stay in de house so much, honey, it is not good for your 'gestive organs; let Mammy bring you your hood an' mantle?"

"Thank you; I believe I will go for a walk, the air is so soft and balmy. Where is brother Walter, Mammy? Please go and call him to join me this evening, as Mr. Hastings is sleeping, and Miss Stanley is indisposed."

Mammy got her mistress' things, and then went to find her young master; but Walter was not in his room, nor in the library, nor the parlor, and Mammy came back, and said, "Miss Norva, I 'spects you will find young master out in de grounds somewhere."

"Perhaps I may," Norva replied, as she went down the steps and into the wide hall.

Mammy lingered in Norva's room for some time setting things to order, and shook her head, muttering, "T'ings ain't like dey used to was, by



a jugfull. Miss Norva is down in de mouf; an' Master Walter, he wanders about from place to place like some lost spirit from de o'der world. What is de matter wid de boy, anyhow? It all comes ob ole massa turning de Mead into a tavern. Miss Norva, when she married dat white-libered cussady ob a man, I was gwine to say (but Silvia Turner won't swear, 'deed she won't), just married de whole Hastings family. Dey know which side ob der bread is buttered; dey is poor, Miss Norva is rich, an' dey will hug up to her like a sick kitten to a hot griddle, deed dey will, chillun."

When everything was arranged to Mammy Silvia's satisfaction, she went out of the room still muttering to herself.

When Norva stepped out upon the steps, she saw her father-in-law passing slowly to and fro, with his hands behind him, and his head bent in deep thought. He was so absorbed in his meditations, whatever they might be, that he failed to observe her, and Norva passed quietly down the

steps and out into the lovely grounds, and down to the shores of the beautiful crystal lake to see the last pale, golden ray of the setting sun, mirrored on its deep, calm bosom. She sank down on a low, rustic seat, near a statue of Diana. She was concealed almost from view, even in daylight, in this lovely nook, to any one approaching the lake from the house. When she had seated herself she dropped her hands in her lap, and let her eyes wander over the lovely scene by which she was surrounded—the grand and glorious mountains, and river scenery, and the fast thickening shadows of night.

A strange influence held her to this enchanted spot. How calm and beautiful nature was! The soft south winds gently swayed the boughs of the dark, rich green of the pines and cedars, and softly whispered to the leafless boughs of the giant oaks, beech, and chestnut, telling them that in a few more days they too would be clothed and decked in their emerald garb. The blue waters of the lake came up in little wavelets almost to her feet.

Soon the young crescent moon arose like a half-circle of silver in the clear expanse of blue, which was fast becoming thickly jewelled with stars. How those bright, glimmering stars danced and sparkled in the waters of the lake! The dew was beginning to fall, but still poor Norva could not go.

## CHAPTER XI.

## WHAT IS THIS I HEAR?

NORVA could hear the beating of her own heart between the sound of the gentle little wavelets at her feet, as they leaped and softly kissed the sandy beach. Sitting there in the calm, holy stillness of that lovely evening, a deep-drawn sigh escaped her breast. Almost at the same moment she heard voices and footsteps approaching, and a faint flush died her cheek, as she recognized the voices of her husband and his dark and beautiful step-sister. Owing to the almost perfect stillness of the night, Norva could hear every word distinctly that was uttered by the approaching parties, for they were taking the route of the Lovers' Walk for their promenade.

Every walk and nook in those magnificent and enchanting grounds had been named by Norva. This beautiful bordered walk she called the

Lovers' Walk, because it was her favorite since the arrival of Mr. Hastings, the September before. Another she called the Breezy Walk, for here, in the warmest season, a soft and refreshing breeze seemed to cool the brow, when nowhere else a breath of air was stirring; and a third she had named the Evergreen Walk, because of the rich deep shades of the hemlock which met and interlocked their branches overhead.

When she first heard those voices, and the soft blushes stole to her cheeks, she thought: "Dear, dear Lawrence! how wicked of me to think that your heart does not beat for me with the same warmth and love it did a few short weeks ago. You and dear, sweet Octavia have missed me, and are looking for me now. I should have remained within the walls of the dear old Mead, until you had risen from your siesta, and have been the first object for your eyes to have rested upon; and now you have come, with love beaming from your soul, to take me back to our home."

Oh! the pure, sweet love that filled' Norva's

heart, and lighted up her dark, tender eyes at this thought. But the first words that fell distinctly on her ear sent a chill to her heart.

“Dear Lawrence,” said the sweet, seductive voice of Miss Stanley, “how long is this thing to last? how long are you going to keep me here with another between us? I do not think I can stand it much longer. You promised me when you married that stately Queen of the Mountains that you would never forget I was the first love of your heart.”

“No, no, darling Octavia, I can never, never forget that you are my *first* and my *only* love. To you I render all my heart’s homage; you are the guiding star of my existence. I acknowledge to you, my queen, that I feel as though I were in eternal torment, when I think of my situation. Bear with me, dearest Octavia, and all will yet go well. If it will soothe your aching heart any, because fate, or rather circumstances have denied us for a time that sweet bliss that shall *yet* be ours—remember, my own darling, you are the only

woman I ever loved, or ever shall love; and though the world calls Norva Hastings my wife, never does a heart-throb go out to her from me;" and as these cruel words fell from Lawrence Hastings' lips, the two passed on, little dreaming that Norva had heard them.

She sat perfectly still, with a face as pale as death, and her delicate hands clasped in her lap, peering out on the tranquil waters at her feet, while her heart beat painfully and her temples throbbed with intense suffering. "Can it be possible," she thought, "that that was *my* husband, *my* Lawrence, uttering such cold and cruel words about his wife to another woman, and *that* woman the beautiful Octavia Stanley—she whom I have always loved and treated as a sister? No, no; God forbid! It must be a horrible dream—I am ill. Fie on me; to doubt for a moment his great love for me. When I return to the house I will tell him what I thought I heard him and Octavia say, and he will laugh at me for my foolishness, and, kissing my lips as he always does,

bid me dismiss such foolish thoughts from my mind. Oh, my darling husband! But," and she pressed her hand upon her heart, "I cannot forget a little incident I witnessed in the library the other day between Octavia and him," she muttered, covering her eyes with her hand, as though she would shut out the sight, if possible.

The dark phantom would not leave her. She could still see her husband as he sat reading before the wood fire, and Octavia as she came into the library in quest of a book; and, seeing that Mr. Hastings was alone, went up to him, and fell upon her knees at his feet, and buried her face on the arm of his chair, while a tremor passed over her small, graceful form. She spoke not a word, neither did he, but he turned very pale and hastily arose and left the room, leading Octavia by the hand. Norva was in the conservatory, and the door which communicated with the library was open. They did not know she was there. It was this scene that had cast a faint shadow over her heart, but a shadow not so faint



but what old Mammy Silvia's keen eyes saw it. But so great was Norva's love for her husband, that she had tried to make herself believe it was some little sisterly grievance; yet she could not but feel pained at their conduct. And now, as she had heard a portion of her husband's and Octavia's dishonorable conversation, she began to realize the truth.

“God help me in my great trouble,” Norva exclaimed, while her form quivered with a sudden spasm of pain, and the great tears of anguish and wounded pride rolled down her face. “Why should such suffering be mine? Why does he not love me? He says his heart never gives one throb for me. Oh! my darling mother, look down to-night from your heavenly home, and breathe a prayer upon your poor, suffering, wronged child; watch over me, and be my guardian angel, for I feel that there is a dark shadow resting over my future destiny,” she murmured, as she raised her eyes towards heaven; then, letting her head fall upon her troubled

breast, sat perfectly motionless until the young crescent moon had vanished from sight.

At length she heard her name called softly: "Mrs. Hastings; Norva, my darling wife, why do you linger here so far into the night? Octavia and I have been looking for you everywhere. As the dew was falling fast, she returned to the house, and I continued my search for you; and here I find you all damp and cold, out of doors at this time of night. Were you dreaming of love and me, my darling? What a heavenly boon to possess the love of such a rare jewel as you, my pet, and to be allowed the liberty of loving you so devotedly, as I do. Such women as you and my beautiful sister Octavia Stanley are oftener sought than found, and I feel proud to share the love and confidence of two such women. I feel blessed beyond the common order of men." So he said as he kissed his wife's cold lips; but she did not see the hypocritical smile that passed over his face while speaking.

She made no reply to him, but threw her

loving arms around his neck, and buried her head on his bosom, saying:

“Dear Lawrence, dear husband, you still love me, do you not?” and her voice was so sweet and sad that it would have touched the heart of almost any man save him, and a smile wreathed his lips as a low, musical laugh broke from them and rang out on the still darkness of the night.

“Love you, my angel, my queen? Of course I love you. What ever put a doubt into your head?” and he drew her to him and looked down into her face.

She could only answer: “Nothing, love; it was childish of me to ask you that question,” she said, even while she felt the gloom gathering around her, and knew that she had not spoken the real sentiments of her troubled soul.

Why could she not tell him what she had seen and heard? Reader, her husband possessed one of those strong magnetic temperaments, and ruled her every thought when she was near him.

Arising, he drew Norva's hand through his

arm, and led her to the Mead, speaking words of love and comfort to her as they were wending their way home; and as he was about to utter another strain of endearments as false as they were fair in their outward appearance, a low, mocking laugh fell upon their ears. There was something so strange, wild and mad in this laugh, that Norva shuddered with fear. Even Hastings' blood ran cold in his veins; but as his wife clung more closely to him, he said:

“Do not be frightened, love; it is some of the negroes, perhaps, cutting up some of their antics.”

“No, no, dear; that laugh never came from the lips of a negro,” said Norva, trembling.

“But you are not frightened so badly, my darling, my angel wife, that you do not feel safe with me?” said Mr. Hastings, pressing his wife's cold fingers.

“I know, dear husband, you would protect me at the risk of your life if I were exposed to danger, but yet there was something so fearful in that laugh,” said Norva.

“Yes, my darling,” he said, while a cruel smile played about his mouth, “you are right. I would willingly sacrifice my life for you, if need be. Do you think, dearest, you could willingly leave your beautiful home and your kindred for a year or two, for my sake?”

In a tone of some surprise she said: “What do you mean? Where do you wish me to go?”

He knew from her voice she was troubled at his question, and he said:

“I do not wish you to go anywhere, just now; but Octavia pines for dear old London again, and you and I will some day have to take her back. But we will not be long absent; a while in London, and a flying visit to France, Italy and Spain, and then back to the Mead. You are too rich a gem, my sweet wife, to live forever hidden away among these mountains, grand as they are.”

By this time they had reached the house, just as the elder Hastings was entering it. His face was ghastly pale, and his body shook with great nervous agitation as he walked hastily down the wide hall without speaking.

It was not yet ten o'clock when Hastings led his wife to their pleasant little sitting-room. Seeing how pale and troubled she looked, he urged her to retire, saying he would go himself and find her maid to attend to her. As he passed out at the door, he met Mammy Silvia, who threw her head back with the air of an insulted queen. Neither Hastings nor Mammy spoke. Silvia entered her mistress' room, and was alarmed when she saw how pale and ill she looked.

“Let Mammy get you a glass ob wine, honey chile. You looks like you had seen a ghost, or some other libe fing, 'deed you does. Your hands is like ice. I hope you didn't stay in de park till dis time ob de night, wid de dew a falling on you; case if you did, Massa will have to send and have Dr. Adams fatched afore morning, that he will, my lamb.”

Just then Norva's maid knocked at the door. Mammy Silvia went and opened it.

“You can go back to de cabin, Sue; I will stay

wid Miss Norva till she gets sleepy, an' tend to all her wants. Dis is Saturday night, Sue, an' I know dat trim-looking nigger, Sam Silvers, is in your mammy's cabin, wid eyes and ears open, a waiting for you; so go 'long, honey gal, you is like all de rest ob de fools in dis world, dey won't listen to dar mammies. Go on, Sue, gal, do not mind an ole fool like me; I was young once myself, honey, and I kinder knows how it goes."

Then coming back to her beloved young mistress, Silvia said: "Go to bed, honey chile, an' I will make you a warm foot-bath an' bring you some wine."

"No; no wine, Mammy Silvia, but you may have Uncle Sam go and draw me a glass of that delicious cider, and you may mull it for me; I can get wine anywhere, but pure, sweet cider from my dear father's cellar I may not enjoy long."

"An' why not, honey?—you know ole massa's cellar is never without cider, summer an' winter. Honey, what does you mean?"

"I mean this, dear Mammy Silvia: Mr. Hastings

is thinking of going to London, and taking me with him for a year or so, and I shall miss some of my home luxuries very much. So, while I can get it, I will drink cider.”

Silvia started back, and a troubled look overspread her honest old face, as she exclaimed, “Take you to Lonon! that cussady dirty hole, I was agwine to say—but I shan’t, for Silvia Turner never swars. I say you shan’t go dar now; look what has come to you by going dar once in your life to that nasty little place whar nobody ’spectable will live; a place whar all de scum of dis country come from. No sich family as de Hamp-tons live in dat place, an’ if Mr. Hastings wants to go to Lonon, let him go an’ take that little, soft-purring black cat with him, an’ that ole Tom of a daddy of his—but you take my ’vice, honey; don’t you go; if you does, you’ll be sorry for it, an’ neber come back again.”

The faithful old soul hid her face in the folds of Mrs. Hastings’ dress and wept like a child. Norva’s heart was touched, and, laying one cold,



soft hand on Silvia's head, she said, "Mammy, I will be compelled to go from my dear home just to get rid of hearing you abuse my husband. Go now and prepare the cider for me, for I am very cold and sleepy."

"Yes, honey; may de Lord forgib me for 'glecting my duty; but ole Satan do get a shot of me sometimes so strong it is hard for me to shake him off; I does pray de Lord to 'serve me from his hoofs an' horns."

"Then, resist him, dear old Mammy, and fight him off," said Norva, gently, "or he may get so strong a hold on you, you may not be able to free yourself from his clutches."

"Hio! dat I do try to do, honey; I keep my candles burning, watching my chance to dodge him; that I do, my lub-chile. Now I will go, honey, an' look arter your cider, an' if I don't ketch up wif de debil, my name isn't Silvia Turner—that it aint."

## CHAPTER XII.

## WALTER IS TRACKED.

LATE as was the hour after leaving his wife's room, Lawrence Hastings went back upstairs softly, and gave a low, peculiar knock at a door on the right hand of the hall, and a sweet, silvery voice said, "Come in, dear Lawrence."

"Hist! my love, not so loud—it is *your* Lawrence."

Quickly the bolt flew back and the door opened, and Lawrence Hastings was in the presence of the only woman he loved. A pair of beautiful, snowy arms were thrown around his neck, and kiss after kiss was given from Octavia's rosy lips. He gathered the small but perfect form in his arms, and pressed passionate kisses upon her dark hair and eyes, while his heart pulsated wildly, and a tender light shone from his cold blue eyes—a light that had never shone from them for his

beautiful wife, whom he had married not for love, but for gold.

He and Octavia Stanley are planning how they can get possession of Mr. Hampton's vast wealth. Octavia's mother was a Spaniard of great beauty, and had married a young English officer who died soon after Octavia's birth. In due time, Mrs. Stanley married Mr. Hastings, but by the time Octavia had reached womanhood her step-father had squandered all her mother had left her, with nothing except an old ruined and dilapidated castle on the coast of Cornwall, whose solid walls were washed by the dull, sad waves of the sea, as it beat upon the old gray rocks. This castle had been uninhabited for two generations. Octavia's father had intended to repair and fit it up, but died before this work was accomplished, and after Mrs. Stanley married Mr. Hastings she had not the means to do so, for she saw her fortune melting very rapidly, and had not strength of mind to oppose her second husband's reckless extravagance.

When Octavia was fifteen, her mother died. Mr.

Hastings still kept his beautiful step-daughter, thinking that in time she would contract a brilliant alliance and he might then have a home. He also hoped his son would marry well. About this time his old college friend at Eton visited him in London from America, and a marriage between Lawrence and Norva Hampton was planned. Mr. Hampton had liked Mr. Hastings very much, and was also pleased with his son Lawrence. By much persuasion and scheming the elder Hastings got Octavia to consent to this marriage, though she and Lawrence were engaged and loved each other as much as two such selfish souls were capable of.

At first she refused to listen to Lawrence's engagement with another; but as he spoke in a manner that fully expressed his determination, she knew it would be best to fall into his views, or at least *appear* to do so. Then Lawrence Hastings had told her that he would in time leave his wife and return to her with all the Hampton wealth as a recompense for their separation; for it was his intention to possess all their wealth, no matter at

what cost. Mr. Hampton had no idea that Mr. Hastings was without means, but after Lawrence and Norva were betrothed, he insisted that Mr. Hastings' family should take up their abode in America. This was readily assented to by Lawrence and his father.

Even after the marriage had taken place, Octavia retained her power over Lawrence Hastings; they were two strong, magnetic souls ever drawing toward each other. The elder Hastings intimated to his old friend that it would be "just the thing if they could only succeed in bringing about a marriage between Walter and Octavia;" he did not add, that he wished to see both Lawrence and Miss Stanley settled at the Mead, that he himself might be well provided for, and have a home within its walls for the remainder of his life.

The reader knows how Mr. Hampton looked upon Mr. Hastings' suggestion, from what Walter told his sister on that winter morning when he confided to her his love for Amy Le Clare. Since Norva's marriage Mr. Hampton had begged Walter

to address Octavia, but Walter replied that he did not love her, and never would; at which Mr. Hampton became very angry, and sternly demanded that he would "never think of marrying that young savage." This was the evening before he started Walter to B——, on business.

Mr. Hastings frequently spoke of a union to Octavia between herself and Walter. She would give a low, musical laugh, and say, "Dear papa, I do not think young Hampton appreciates my charms very much, and, to tell the truth, I would rather try my powers at charming the father than the son. How very nice it would be for me to be Lawrence's mother-in-law!" Of course, Miss Stanley did not wish to let her step-father know how matters stood between her and his son; not that she feared him, but she desired to let Lawrence work out their plans himself.

To-night, as she felt his warm breath on her cheeks, she said, "Oh! Lawrence, why do you not take your father into our plans? He is older than we are, and perhaps he can suggest a way for you

to escape from the galling bonds that bind you to that soft simpleton who hangs on your every word, and worships you so. If you do not, you will have to take me away from this, or I will be tempted to do something desperate. Lawrence, this is killing me," she cried.

He said: "My darling, I know it is hard for you to endure all this, but it must be so a little longer; remember what we have at stake. We are poor; with the exception of your jewels, all else is gone, but a bare standing wall and a few old tumble-down towers at Castle Rook. This composes the bulk of your wealth, and I have nothing. Look at this magnificent plantation and all the slaves, this beautiful home; and remember this plantation is in the rich lowlands near Wilmington, and the gold mine at Charlotte, which is now paying Mr. Hampton a handsome dividend every year. What a happy life we could enjoy with all this wealth! and it *shall* be ours. But you must have patience. It will take time to develop our future plans. So you think it would

be well to take the old gentleman into our confidence, and see if he cannot assist us and further our great undertaking. I thought at first to take Mrs. Hastings to Wilmington for a time, knowing her presence was so repugnant to you, but she seems reluctant to go, as she has a discarded lover there, in the shape of a young minister, who they say has almost broken his heart over her; but I will have you and father take a trip to New Orleans, to remain there until the weather gets warm, and when you return to Hampton Mead, my plans may begin to assume a definite form."

"Oh! but it is so hard for me to tear myself from you, my love," said Octavia, in a mournful voice, choked with unshed tears.

"I know it is, my angel," said Mr. Hastings, straining her to his bosom; "but it is growing late, love. Go to your chamber. Trust me, and try to rest. I shall not go to Mrs. Hastings' room to-night. My darling, we must be very cautious. That old black Egyptian mummy that is forever hanging around Mrs. Hastings, dislikes and dis-



trusts me, and I feel that she has got her mind set upon watching me. One of the first things I will do, when I am master here, will be to sell old Silvia." Then, with one more kiss, Lawrence Hastings stole out of Octavia's room.

So many thoughts forced themselves upon his mind that he felt he could not sleep; consequently he did not seek his pillow, but lit a cigar and went out into the clear, calm starlight to smoke. It was after eleven o'clock before he thought of returning to the house again, when he saw Walter emerge from the side entrance, with a package under his arm, and walk rapidly down to the river. Lawrence followed him cautiously. When Walter reached the river, he put his bundle in a canoe, and commenced to row rapidly up the dark stream.

"Ha, ha! Walter Hampton, you have a secret, and I am going to find it out," Mr. Hastings muttered. "It may be of value to me in my future plans." A fiendish light gleamed from his eyes as he walked along the river bank, keeping the canoe in sight.

It was a long walk of five miles he had of it, before he reached the place where Walter landed his little barque. It was at the foot of an overhanging cliff of rocks. Lawrence saw Walter fasten his canoe to a small tree, lift his bundle, and hurry up the rough side of the cliff and disappear. Hastings watched for two hours, but could not get a clue to the secret, nor find where he had disappeared; so he untied the canoe, jumped in, and muttered:

“I will ride, this time, young man, and you can walk. By the eternal gods! I’ll know his secret,” and his hard laugh rang out on the dark waters like the laugh of an evil spirit, as he was.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A DARKER SHADOW.

ALL day long the rain had been falling, with no ray of sunshine to relieve the gloom. Shadows hung thick and dark over mountains and river; but a darker, deeper shadow rested on Hampton Mead—a shadow that cast a gloom over every heart there, save that of Lawrence Hastings. Walter, the proud young heir, was *banished* from the home of his childhood, cast out from his father's heart and from his beloved sister's presence.

The morning after Lawrence had followed Walter, he arose early, and was out in the grounds before the eastern horizon had received its first streaks of gold, or the gray dawn had been pierced with the sunlight, laying in wait for Walter; and soon the latter made his appearance.

“Ah! Walter, you are up early this morning,” said Lawrence, blandly.

“Somewhat earlier than you, perhaps,” said Walter coldly, and he shot a keen glance at him as he spoke. He felt that Lawrence was his deadly enemy, and that he suspected his secret, perhaps knew it, or why did he find his canoe gone, and then find it safely chained to its stake when he reached home? But Walter could see no expression in his brother-in-law’s face that revealed the secret, if he knew it, and Walter went on into the house without any further conversation.

After breakfast, Lawrence asked Mr. Hampton if he would get Walter to go to B—— for him, to procure seats in the Wednesday’s stage-coach, for his father and sister. Walter gladly consented to do so, for he felt it would be a relief to have Octavia and Mr. Hastings away from the Mead. So, immediately after finishing his breakfast, he set out for his fifteen-mile ride on Whirlwind, with a comparatively light heart.

Soon after Walter's departure, Lawrence Hastings had a long conversation with his father; then he sought Mr. Hampton and said:

"Sir, it is a painful duty I have to perform, but I know you will thank me for it," and he sat down, while a troubled look appeared to come over his face.

Mr. Hampton saw this look, and, in a somewhat alarmed manner, said :

"What have you to communicate to me, my dear son, that brings that pained expression into your face? Is it anything concerning my daughter? Let me know at once," and Mr. Hampton's face turned very pale as he spoke.

"Nothing, my dear sir, concerning your daughter; she is quite well and cheerful; but it is of your son Walter I would speak. I know you have very brilliant prospects for him, but, my dear sir, Walter has a secret. All his nights are spent away from home. I think he is away gambling, or else he has that half-breed, Hester Spotswood's granddaughter, Amy Le Clare, hid in the mountains

somewhere. I think it would be well to watch him."

At this Mr. Hampton arose to his feet and commenced to walk up and down his library in a state of great mental suffering and wild fears for his beloved son's welfare, but he said, after a few moments had been spent in thinking the matter over :

"I thank you, Lawrence, for your information in this case. I will not watch Walter—I have too much self-respect for that—but I will boldly and above board, ask him, when he returns from B——, what has become of this girl, Amy Le Clare."

Walter was watched by another person besides Lawrence Hastings. After the interview with his father-in-law, Lawrence went down to the river and jumped into a canoe, telling Uncle Isom he was going a fishing. Lawrence was absent some time. When he returned he was very pale and excited. He had explored the cave and found the remains of a fair young girl of rare beauty, lying on a rude, but clean bed, in a large cavern

or chamber, whose grand architecture came direct from the hand of the great Builder of builders. She could not have been dead long, for her body was hardly cold. How holy and beautiful she looked, lying there on that humble bed, wrapt in the arms of death, and all alone in her cold, sweet loveliness, with her delicate white hands crossed upon her motionless bosom, and her glorious hair falling in rippling waves of gold about her childish face, so calm and heavenly in its mysterious silence, and the slanting rays of sunshine that found their way through the rocks fell upon the lovely sleeper's face, resting like a holy benediction over the beautiful, unknown dead! It was a scene so grand, so holy, so sad, so spiritual in its presentation, as to almost make one in love with death.

Lawrence stood for a time like one in a dream, and gazed down upon the still form at his feet, and a wave of half pity, half regret, passed over his cold, hard heart, though, villain as he was, it only lasted for a moment, and like the great

tidal wave of old ocean was lost. It was the first feeling of pity that ever found a place in his bosom, save for the dark and bewitching Octavia Stanley, whom he loved as much as it was possible for a man of his organization to do. Having taken in the surroundings, he left the cave, casting one hurried glance at the young girl as she lay so peacefully, a victim to the king of terrors, and entering his barque turned his face toward the Mead.

Walter returned the evening of the same day that Lawrence Hastings had visited the cave, and informed his father that he had secured seats in the stage-coach. That night, as Walter lingered in the library, his father noticed a strange expression in his son's eyes; and, turning to him suddenly, said:

“Walter, where is your mother's wedding-ring? I have not seen it for months.”

“I will hand it to you to-morrow, father; I am too tired to-night to get it for you,” said he, while deathly pallor tinged his face.



Poor Walter had promised his father something that he would not be able to do.

After leaving his father's presence, Walter went quietly out of the house, and, entering his canoe, struck boldly up the stream, keeping time with his oars to the sobbing of the waters which seemed to be breathing a requiem for a lost soul, and an awful presentiment lurked in his heart that something was about to happen—that the corner-stone of his past sweet happiness was about to be torn from its foundation, for a dark pall enveloped his every thought, and he felt as though the angel of darkness had cast his sombre wings over his future destiny, obliterating every ray of sunshine and happiness from his pathway.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Walter again returned to his once happy childhood's home, his handsome young face looked as though years of suffering had passed over it; his eyes were sunken, and his mouth wore a pained expression. Oh, what a wreck he presented of the once happy and handsome Walter, and he

was afraid to appear before his stern father, so great was the change he had undergone; but he determined to tell the truth if it were demanded of him, *no matter at what cost, or how severe the penalty.*

The morning had far advanced when Walter met his father after his absence, and a fixed, determined look was on his face. The father was the first to speak.

“Well, Walter, have you brought me the ring?”

“No, father, I have not, and now let us come to a full understanding. I know you had great hopes for me, dear father, and wished to see me wed Miss Stanley, but let me tell you once and for all, Miss Stanley can never be anything to me except an acquaintance, for my heart is given to one who is as far above her in point of intellect and virtue as the sun is above the earth. Oh, father! let me tell you of her I love; then you will have compassion on your son!” cried Walter, his voice trembling with deep emotion.

“No! no!” exclaimed Mr. Hampton, sternly. “Walter, my boy, the pride of my old age, I will listen to no story of your love for that half-breed whom you keep concealed in the mountains. This morning you must choose your course in life: either give up home, father and sister, or else abandon *her*; and instead of leading a miserable existence, and being a dishonor to all who know you, be a man and a gentleman.”

“Be it as you say, my dear father, and now good-bye, for I may never look upon your face again, and though you drive me from my childhood’s home and all I hold dear, yet I shall never forget you are my father. Farewell, father. May my sister Norva be a comfort to you in your old age,” said Walter, in a voice filled with deep emotion.

Oh! the grief and anguish that was depicted upon his young but careworn face, as he went out from the dear old Mead, an exile from home, and though so near, and yet so far, for the noble Walter Hampton was *banished* from Hampton Mead.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE WILL.

IT was on Tuesday morning that Walter Hampton bade his father that sad farewell, and still the rain made mournful music as it fell in great drops upon the window-panes. Out of doors it was dark and dreary; within was darker gloom, which had swallowed up all the sunshine within that once happy home, and to-day the hearts of two of its inmates are wrung with sorrow.

Late in the day Norva came down into the library to see her father. She found him sitting near a window with his face partially bowed upon his hands, and she started back in alarm and surprise when she saw how aged he had grown since the previous night when she had bid him good-night. She laid a soft hand upon his shoulder. He had not seen her enter the room, and raised

his head in a frightened manner and looked at her; for a moment he thought his beloved wife stood before him. Then, remembering the events of the morning, he gathered his gentle daughter to his heart and wailed forth :

“Oh, Norva! my daughter! have pity on me, or my poor old heart will break.”

Norva twined her arms about his neck, and said softly :

“Dear father, what is the matter with you this morning? You seem to be in deep distress. Tell me what it is, that I may share your grief, whatever it is. Where is my brother? I have not seen him this morning, and that is strange, for he has always been the first to greet me as I left my room when he was at home;” then, subduing a wild throb at her heart, she sat down by her father’s side and said : “Dear father, tell me all.”

Mr. Hampton complied with her request, though it was a painful duty for him to perform. When he finished he lifted his daughter in his arms, and bore her to her chamber; she had

fainted, and lay like one dead; a horrible nightmare seemed to be upon him, from which he tried to awaken. He thought he was bereft of both his children at once, so long did Norva lie in the death-like swoon that came upon her when her father told her he had banished his only son from his home.

At length, with the assistance of Mammy Silvia and Aunt Louise, the housekeeper, Norva Hastings recovered, and her eyes rested full upon her father's troubled face, but no words fell from her pale lips. Her father was greatly pained at the look she gave him, and felt somewhat rebuked for his rashness; but his heart did not relent towards Walter. Though a kind and noble-hearted man, he was very proud, and had had bright hopes that Walter would fulfil his cherished dreams. Now he beheld all those bright hopes lying in ruins at his feet—trampled upon by him from whom he had *expected so much*, and his name which had never borne a blemish, now dishonored, and by his son; he felt that he could no longer be a son of his; and going

out of the room he ordered Isom Turner to go tell Mr. Byrd, his lawyer, that he wanted to see him at the Mead. at once.

Lawrence Hastings heard Mr. Hampton give this order, and his evil eyes lighted up with a strange, triumphant glow; for he *knew why* Byrd was sent for, just as well as he did a few hours later, when Mr. Hampton called him into the library and said:

“Hence and forever, Lawrence, you are my only son. Mr. Byrd will soon be here, and I shall make my will. I have a presentiment that something is going to happen to me, and I do not want Walter to have any part of my wealth. He is the first Hampton that has ever disgraced the name.” Then he bowed his head in his hands, and sat in deep thought for a long time. Lawrence was so overjoyed at this piece of news, he could not find voice to speak for some time; at last he said:

“Do not be too hasty, my dear sir. Walter may reform his evil ways, when he has sown his wild oats. He is not yet twenty-two. He has no

profession, and he will soon tire of this girl, when he fully understands what trouble she has caused him."

"Oh! I could perhaps have forgiven him if he had married her; but to keep her hid in the mountains for months, as *his mistress*, is more than I can bear, even from a son," said Mr. Hampton.

A sudden thought then entered Lawrence Hastings' mind, and he said, sinking his voice almost to a whisper,

"I do not think that is Walter's greatest fault. I fear his soul is stained with human blood."

A low wail broke from the lips of Mr. Hampton, and he fell back in his chair in spasms, frightful to behold, that made Hastings repent his rash words, for he began to fear Mr. Hampton would not be able to attend to business when his lawyer came. He poured out a glass of wine, and put it to the suffering man's lips, and in a short time Mr. Hampton recovered, and bade Lawrence leave him; "For," said he, "my son, I cannot hear more



at this time; we will talk further on this subject, hereafter."

Thus dismissed, Lawrence went out and ordered a horse to be saddled for his use, as he himself should go for Dr. Adams, to attend his wife, who was quite ill. He did go for the family physician, but first visited the cave where he had seen that beautiful inanimate form with its wealth of golden hair resting like a halo about the cold, sweet face, but there was nothing there to give token that it had ever been the abode of a human being or beings. Lawrence Hastings, cold-hearted as he was, could not banish the sweet, sad vision from his mind.

When he and the physician reached the Mead they found Mr. Byrd had arrived, and was in the library with Mr. Hampton. It was now late in the afternoon, and the rain had ceased, but it was still dark and gloomy. Mr. Byrd was to remain over night, and his horse had been stabled. Dr. Adams was to go on a few miles to visit another patient, then return and remain over night also,

as Mr. Hampton wished to have him as a witness to his will. Before the doctor left, Norva was asleep. Dr. Adams had given her a powerful narcotic; her nerves had been greatly shocked, he said; in a few days he hoped she would be herself again.

After supper, when Mr. Hampton and his attorney had again repaired to the library, Lawrence Hastings went up to Octavia's room and asked her to take a walk with him. She was only too anxious, as she was to leave him for a time on the morrow. When they returned, a happy light beamed from her eyes, and her face was radiant with a look of deep content. After leaving her at the door of her room Lawrence sought his father.

The elder Hastings was pacing his room with a gloomy, discontented look on his face.

“Halloo, old chap! what has come over the spirit of your dreams, now when all is going so well with me?” said his amiable son, with a low, deep laugh of satisfaction; but the cloud did not lift from his father's face, even at the mention of

his own bright prospects, and throwing himself into a chair, Lawrence said: "Come, old man, you have something preying on your mind; out with it; make a clean breast of it; confession is good for the soul, you know."

"Yes, you are right, Lawrence," said Mr. Hastings, seating himself beside his son. "There *is* something preying upon my mind, and as you have confided your plans to me, I will return the compliment by telling you of a little episode in my life. As you know, Lawrence, this is not my first visit to America: I was here when you were a small boy. Well, to make a long story short; I fell in love with a pretty little Indian maiden, and coaxed her from her mother's home. But she was so pure and virtuous, that I was compelled to marry her before she would consent to leave Norfolk for Richmond with me. I married her under an assumed name. Shortly after I reached Richmond I heard that Henry Stanley was dead, and his widow was free. I had married your mother for money, and soon after her death I went to Spain,

and there I met Octavia's mother, and I loved her with all the love and passion of my soul, but she rejected my suit and married Henry Stanley, but after I had married this Amy Spotswood, and I knew the first love of my youth was free again, I left Amy on the eve of becoming a mother, and wrote her a note telling her to return to her mother at Norfolk, for she was not my wife. I then hastened back to England, and in due course of time married Mrs. Stanley, as you are aware. I married her at the time, not knowing but what I had a living wife in America, but she only lived four months after I left her, leaving a frail, golden-haired baby-girl behind her, our child, to whom she gave the name of Amy—Amy Le Clare, as that was the name I married her under.”

Lawrence Hastings started back in great surprise, and said :

“This is a strange story, sir. How do you know all this? who informed you of that young girl's death, and of her child?”

“Her grandmother, Hester Spotswood. I have

met her several times prowling around Hampton Mead. She never saw me in Virginia, but she confided all this to me, and she says she is going to find Amy's father and bring him to judgment, for she has pledged herself to have a terrible revenge on this man, and her indignation fills me with alarm."

Lawrence remembered the laugh, for he and Norva had heard it.

"Lawrence," resumed the old gentleman, "I am glad to leave this neighborhood on the morrow, for a time at least."

## CHAPTER XV.

LADY HESTER.

A FEW miles from the great manufacturing town of Manchester was situated one of the most beautiful homes in England—Glen Park. For generations and generations it had belonged to the Glenmores. The last of that name had passed away, and the estate had gone into the possession of a woman. She was a tall, dark woman, of middle age, with eyes as dark as night, and hair outrivalling the blackness of the raven's wing.

It is January, and one year since Walter Hampton persuaded Amy Le Clare to leave her grandmother and become his wife, and on this bleak January day, Amy, fair and pale as a lily, lies in a darkened room at Glen Park. She lies so still you can hardly tell if she breathes. Her grandmother comes in softly and puts her dark cheek down to the face of the sleeper, 'then she

goes to a little crib and looks down on Amy's innocent baby-boy, and her face becomes stern and hard as she gazes upon its little head covered with rich, dark, silky brown hair, and Lady Hester Spotswood glided out of the room with a fierce light shining in her eyes.

Perhaps, dear reader, you are surprised to find Hester Spotswood in England, and the mistress of Glen Park, but the following will explain her presence here: Hester's father, just before his death, became the heir of Glen Park, and as she was his only child he forgave her, and left her heir to his beautiful English home. Her father was the Earl of Glenmore, and now his daughter is Lady Hester Spotswood. When Hester learned of her sudden wealth, through the death of her father, she commenced searching for Amy. She tracked Walter to the cave where they had lived for months.

During Walter's absence she had gone into the cave to see Amy, and asked her if she were Walter Hampton's wife. Amy's face had burned

crimson, and her eyes sought the floor of the rocky cavern, as she said :

“ Dear grandmother, I cannot tell you.”

“ Cannot tell me, Amy! My God! oh! Amy, Amy! how heavily the curse has fallen on me, and on your mother, and now *you too are doomed!*”

Then Hester fell upon her knees in that lonely mountain fastness, and her voice rang out in a wail of anguish.

When Hester looked in Amy's face again, she saw all the blood had left the girl's face, and she was as white as marble, and her voice was sad, as she said, “ Oh, dear grandmother, do not take this so to heart; trust in my dear Walter to make all right soon!”

Hester sprang to her feet, and her eyes flashed fire, as she said, “ ‘ Make all right soon!’—right a wrong like yours. I blame *you*, Amy—blood of my blood, and flesh of my flesh; but I blame Walter Hampton *more!* Come with me, my child, and we will leave this country and go to a foreign



land, and live for ourselves and the good we can do for others."

"But, dear grandmother, I cannot leave Walter; oh, no! I cannot leave Walter!"

Hester trembled from head to foot, as she said, "Amy, say nothing to Mr. Hampton of my being here, and I will come again in a few days," and she then took her leave.

But early on the morning that Walter went to B——, and Lawrence Hastings had explored the cave, Hester had been there. Amy was not well, and her grandmother prepared her some food, which she left, saying she should return ere the night-shadow fell again. Half an hour after Hester Spotswood took her departure, Lawrence Hastings found the cold, still form of Amy, as the reader already knows.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Hester returned. She tied her canoe to a tree, and took out a pair of soft, white blankets which lay in the frail barque, also an extra one to spread over the form she expected to recline beneath it. After

making fast her canoe, she spread the blankets smoothly upon the floor of her canoe, and went into the cave, where she found her granddaughter, just as Lawrence Hastings had left her, cold, pale and still, with the delicate white hands lying on her breast, and her golden hair falling like a halo about her sweet, childish face. When she looked upon Amy, a smile of triumph wreathed her cold, proud lips, and she said, "It is well; the drug I gave her has had the desired effect; she will sleep until I get her miles and miles from Hampton Mead and the 'dear Walter' she talks so much about."

We will not tarry longer with details as to how Hester Spotswood reached Philadelphia with her granddaughter.

The day upon which Walter had taken Amy from her grandmother's cabin, Hester Spotswood had gone to Mr. Field's house to do some work, and while there, Mr. Field brought a newspaper from the post-office, containing an advertisement requesting Hester Spotswood to call on her father's

old business managers, "Sparks & Wind." So, after returning to her lonely wayside cabin, and finding Amy had disappeared, she went to B——, and took the stage for Wilmington. All this had taken time; but when she became fully aware of her duty to her grandchild, and had considered the matter well, she felt that she could not leave America without at least looking upon Amy's face again, and she went to work to find her; and now that she had succeeded, and believing her not to be Walter's wife, she determined to carry Amy to England, and there induce her to lead a better life; for she fully believed Amy Le Clare had sinned. She kept Amy under the influence of a powerful but harmless drug known to her, until they were far out at sea. Even up to the morning we find them at Glen Park, Amy's system was seldom free from the effects of this drug.

It was almost an overwhelming shock to Lady Hester, when she discovered that Amy would in time become a mother; but she was compelled to make the best of her unfortunate situation. She

led a quiet, retired life at Glen Park with her servants, a trusty land-agent looking after her tenants, of whom there were many.

Lady Hester never thought of entering society. She still buried her bitter sorrow far down in her troubled heart, and waited for the time when she should avenge her beautiful young daughter's wrongs, and her grandchild's. She felt even more bitter this morning, when this little innocent babe was placed in her arms, and the physician told her it was doubtful if the young child-mother would live.

Will Lady Hester have her revenge? and what shape will it take? Will poor pale Amy ever again see Walter Hampton and the beautiful Mead, far away among the North Carolina mountains? Not if Lady Hester can prevent it. She disliked to be addressed as "my lady," and simply looked upon herself as Hester Spotswood, in whose veins the purest blood of America flowed. But custom is everything. She had taken up her abode for the present, at least, in England. The

three servants she retained had been in the service of Lord Glenmore, and always addressed her as Lady Hester.

When she thinks of her days in America when she had incurred her father's displeasure and had received his curse, and of all the bitter days she had spent, yet, oh, how gladly would she give all this grandeur up, and return again to America and take up her life of toil and hardships, if she could only have her Amy an innocent child again, sitting at her knees as in the days of yore! This she thinks can never be, and an expression of intense suffering sweeps over her proud, cold face, as she again seeks the room of the young mother and child.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## LOST AGAIN.

EARLY on the morning after the making of Mr. Hampton's will, Mr. Hastings and Octavia Stanley left Hampton Mead for the village of B——. Octavia had never passed over this road before, and though she was a great admirer of the beautiful, had given no thought to the God who made the mountains in all their grandeur and magnificence; the proud and majestic blue rivers, threading their way over great rocks and falling in silver cascades, making sweet music as they ripple on their way to the sea. We love to linger over this road from Hampton Mead to B——, where we cross two of the most beautiful mountain rivers in the world, and where the author of this book has spent so many, many happy days in childhood rowing a frail canoe, and, even as an untaught

child, felt the glory and goodness of God in bestowing so much beauty around our childhood's home.

We will not follow Mr. Hastings and Octavia beyond B——, for after that much of the rugged beauty of the landscape is lost. We will now follow Walter Hampton for a time. Bidding his father good-bye, Walter had Whirlwind saddled, and when he was brought round, mounted and rode away in a brisk gallop up the river's side. He went to the mountain cave, which Lawrence Hastings had visited, but there was no one there to give him a glad welcome, no low, soft, musical voice to express gladness at his coming. All was as quiet as the grave.

A cold, strange, awed feeling came over him, and his young heart wailed forth: "Oh, Amy! Amy! my darling, where are you?" And with a pale, haggard face he left the cave, remounted his horse, and started off in the direction of B——. He was going to see Hester Spotswood; he felt that she had something to do with Amy's disappearance,

but when he reached her wayside-hut he found it deserted. He then went to Mr. Field's, at Cedar Vale, and made inquiries of them. But they said she had not been there for several weeks; that of late she had acted very strangely, since her granddaughter had disappeared some months before. He went on to the crossing of the river, at the point where his horse had so nobly carried Amy and himself. When he had crossed the river he sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, where he had sat before with his dear, unconscious burden, after he had succeeded in getting her out of the water.

How vividly this scene arose before him now! the golden hair falling over his arm, with the snowy lids covering the brown eyes, with deep purple rings settled beneath them, and water issuing from the pallid lips, and the small hands clenched and blue. After working with her for some time—oh, the unspeakable joy he felt when he saw the eyelids quiver and a faint sigh escape her cold lips, and a fervent “Thank God! my



Amy is spared me!" came from Walter. All this comes back to him now.

Where was his loved one now? The soft south winds seemed to whisper to his young troubled heart, "Seek for her until you find her." Then it was not as it is now. The voice of the steam-engine had not echoed over the hills and mountains as they do to-day. They could not step into a telegraph office and send a message to all parts of the world. After sitting there for a while, Walter resolved to ride on to B——, and spend the night at the hotel. He found several papers on a table in his room, and when the waiter brought in lights he sat down to look at them. They were dated several weeks back; and on the first of one of the papers this notice caught his eye:

"If Hester Spotswood will call on Sparks & Wind, she will hear of something to her advantage."

Walter looked at the paper for some time; then his mind was made up: he would start for Wilmington on the morrow, and there he would

find his Amy, and claim her at once. So according to his intentions he took the stage-coach early the next morning and began his tiresome journey, leaving his horse to the care of a friend until his return. Thus we find young Walter Hampton drifting from his home ; the home in which he has no place now ; the old haunts that knew him once will know him no more. Does the old stage-coach, as it rolls along over the rough, uneven roads and through pine forests, bring him any nearer to the loved one he seeks? No; for at this same moment Hester Spotswood and Amy are crossing the mountains into Virginia.

When Walter reached Wilmington, and called on Sparks & Wind, and they refused to give him any information concerning Mrs. Spotswood's whereabouts, his grief knew no bounds; and his poor aching heart almost broke within him.

The lawyers had been requested to keep her residence in England a secret from all the world, and poor Walter left their office with a pale, haggard face; still he would not give up the

search. He would go to Norfolk, to the place where Mrs. Spotswood used to live; perhaps she had carried Amy there. Without even stopping long enough to call on his mother's relatives, he embarked on board a vessel the same day. When he reached Norfolk it was only to be disappointed, and his means were nearly exhausted, but he had a fine gold watch and a valuable solitaire diamond ring; these he could dispose of, and they would assist him in continuing his search, but he would not dispose of them in Norfolk; he could get more for them in Philadelphia, and thither he determined to go. When he reached Philadelphia he called on Charlie Field, who was delighted to see him, but when he took Walter's hand, the young medical student started, and said:

“My dear fellow, you are feverish; your hand is burning with fever, and your face is pale and careworn. What is the matter with our healthful Carolina mountains? Yours is the second pale and careworn face I have seen from there this week.”

“Whose was the other?” gasped Walter, holding his breath for the answer.

“Amy Le Clare,” said Charlie.

“Amy Le Clare!” cried Walter. “Where did you see her?” hoarsely.

“I saw her and her grandmother go on board a vessel bound for Liverpool, as I went aboard to see a friend off for the old world.”

Walter sank down, while a deadly faintness overcame him. He had lived in a state of great excitement for so many weeks, and the shock of losing Amy was too much for his constitution, and he was compelled to succumb to the laws of nature. For many weeks he lay with fever burning and parching his body, and it was a long time before he could walk about, let alone leave his room, but Charlie Field watched over him with all the care and devotion of a tender brother. When Walter got better, Charlie never hinted that, when delirious, he had laid bare part of his heart's trouble; but only a part, however, for he did not reveal what Amy was to him.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE MEAD IS DESERTED.

IT is gloomy at Hampton Mead. The windows are all closed. There is not a single bit of life within its walls. The peaceful, happy home, and contented hearts that once dwelt there are gone. The shadow of Norva's life was deepened by Walter's banishment from his home, insomuch so that she had become quite ill, and Dr. Adams had advised her to a change of scene. But Lawrence Hastings had first suggested this change to the honest old country physician.

At first Norva's father refused to give her up, but a peculiar light shone from her husband's eyes, as he said :

“My dear sir, your daughter is all you have now. Accompany us, and we will try to cheer you in your sorrow,” and he lowered his voice to the softest and most persuasive tone.

The suggestion struck Mr. Hampton favorably ; for when the time for his daughter's departure came he had made his arrangements to accompany her. When she would leave the Mead there would be but one golden link to bind him to his once happy home ; it being the sacred spot where slept his wife, the mother of his children. Now we find him about to leave his adopted home and return to old England. If he could only have seen what the future held for him and his, he would *never* have taken that journey. Perhaps it is well that the veil of the present hides the face of the future, be it for weal or woe. Mr. Hampton had grown very old in the last few weeks ; his hair had scarcely a thread of silver in it when Lawrence had taken up his abode at Hampton Mead, now they were thickly sprinkled through it.

He had given strict orders to his household never to mention the name of his banished son in his presence. This was rather a hard task with the negroes, who had known and loved Walter

from his birth, and especially for Mammy Silvia, whose wrath, when she learned how matters stood, knew no bounds. A morning or two after the making of Mr. Hampton's will, she went to her master's room and fell on her knees at his feet.

"What is it, Aunt Silvia?" said he, huskily; for he surmised why the old faithful creature was there.

"Oh, marster! for de lub ob heben, where is my boy? where is dear Massa Walter, my dear mistress first borned? Oh, marster! have you cast him off, driven him from his home, an' taken dat ar cussady debil of a Mr. Hastings in his place? Oh, marster, do send for my dear lubly boy to come home. If you don't, his moder will rise from de grave, an' 'cuse you ob dis great wrong."

Mr. Hampton grew cold and pale as Silvia spoke, and his voice trembled with agitation, as he said:

"Silvia, Walter Hampton is dead to me henceforth, or as one that had never been; and one

that has never been we cannot name. Therefore, in the future, consider my son Lawrence your young master, which he will be some day if you and he live."

"God forbid!" said Silvia. "When dat ar day comes, master, I shall be all debil. Dear marster, I has pleaded to you for my chile in vain. Now let me tell you something, 'case a 'sentment has come ober me. You has cast my chile from your heart, but he an' his will yet rule at Hampton Mead. De debil will not always rule at large; he will be tied up some ob dese days; den Marster Walter will hab his own. Do you mind what I say, ole massa?"

Mr. Hampton came to Silvia's side and whispered in her ear. The old woman fell over on the floor and moaned like one bereft of her reason. She did not mention Walter's name again from that day to the time when Mr. Hampton, her master, started on his journey, and for many days her face wore a gray, ashen hue, occasioned by great mental suffering. The servants attributed it to her losing



their young mistress and master, for they knew how dear they were to her. But Silvia never enlightened any one of them as to the cause of her grief, not even Isom Turner, her husband. At times she would almost cry out with horror when that thought of crime came up before her. She lived in fear of betraying, by word or deed, the *only* great secret of her life, for it involved the welfare of another for whom she would willingly have died.

Lawrence wrote to his father and Octavia to take a vessel from New Orleans to New York, where he and his wife and father-in-law would meet by the first of September.

The morning on which they started was beautiful in the extreme. Never did the mountains look more grand and majestic than upon that morning—with the glorious rays of the rising sun gilding their emerald tops, and the sky so clear in its azure depths. Never did the trees look greener, the flowers bloom sweeter, or the birds sing more sweetly than upon that morning. It seemed as

though all nature had united in offering its beauty and sublimity as a tribute to those leaving Hampton Mead. Never did it appear more beautiful to poor, pale Norva, as she lay back in the carriage, with a troubled face, and a sad look in her eyes. When would she see this beautiful scenery again?

Ah! when? Mr. Hampton was sad also.

Lawrence took his wife's cold hands in his and said :

“Do not look so sad, my darling. When we return to Hampton Mead, the roses of health will be blooming on your cheeks, as they were when I first met you,” and with his eyes fixed on hers, she smiled up into his face. It was strange—but of late Norva never smiled, only when the eyes of her husband were fixed upon her.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## IN LONDON.

**I**MMEDIATELY after reaching New York, the party went on board of a vessel bound for Liverpool, at which place they duly arrived. After a few days' rest they went to London, and lived in a hotel there. In a few days after they had become somewhat rested and interested in their new surroundings, Mrs. Hastings began to be more cheerful than she had been for many weeks; and when Octavia saw the delicate color stealing into her face, and the soft tender light into her eyes, her soul was troubled. Octavia had lost none of her rare, bewitching beauty, but was becoming thin and pale.

There was no congeniality of feeling between Norva and Octavia. Mrs. Hastings tried to love Octavia for her husband's sake, but could not; and

Octavia hated Norva so deeply that she shunned her as much as possible. One morning, Norva said to her husband:

“Dear Lawrence, do you not feel alarmed about Octavia?”

“Wherefore alarmed, my dear wife?” said he, quickly.

“Because you love her so much, and I think she is going into a consumption,” said Norva, gently.

As she spoke, every vestige of color left her husband’s face, and he hissed forth: “You lie, madam, Octavia cannot die,” and he trembled with deep emotion. Norva recoiled back in alarm, as if the man before her was insane.

Lawrence quickly remembered himself, and going up to his wife he fell upon his knees at her feet, and the voice that spoke was calm and soft, as he said:

“My dear, dear wife, forgive me. I know I have acted like a brute: but your words filled me with alarm, and made me very angry. I should

rather thank you for speaking to me about Octavia with so much interest. She is the play-mate of my childhood. She is too beautiful to die," and in speaking of the beauty of Octavia, a change came over this man's face, a change so great that his wife could not help seeing, and she sunk down into the nearest chair, pale, weak and trembling. Her white lips parted to speak, but her husband came and took her cold hands in his, and smiled down sweetly into her face. His eyes sought hers as he said: "My love, my wife, are you ill?"

In a moment the color came back into her face as she smiled back on him and said: "No, dear, I am not ill, just a little faint," and he gathered her to his heart and pressed kiss after kiss upon her sweet face; and even then he was exulting in his power over her. A few more days and he felt he would be in a fair way to realize his cherished hopes.

After this scene, harmony was restored again between husband and wife. The next day father

and son left London, the latter going to Cornwall, and his father to Manchester. They were absent nearly three weeks, and both reached London on the same day. They did not go to their hotel at once, however, but entered a club-house which both had frequented. Here father and son compared notes.

“Well, old chap,” said Lawrence, familiarly, after he had taken a glass or two of wine, “what success?”

“Splendid, my dear Lawrence, splendid; I have found just the place. Lind Hurst is one of the most secure places of the kind in England; and also one of the most beautiful.”

“I hope you have everything in readiness at Castle Rook?” resumed Mr. Hastings.

“Yes; all is fair and bright in that quarter. I have employed old Delgado to look after my business at Castle Rook, and you know he is to be depended upon. In him and Jessine, his wife, we can put the greatest confidence. I have no fears in that direction,” said Lawrence, as he replenished his glass.

“It’s a nice thing, governor, as they say in America, to marry a fortune. The time was when we could not afford to indulge in anything of this kind,” and as he spoke he held up a decanter.

“Now that we have come to an understanding we had better repair to our hotel and see how our plans will work,” laughed young Hastings, as the two men left the club-house.

When the lamps were lighted for the night, Lawrence knocked softly at Octavia’s door, and was admitted. There was another such meeting as we have seen before at Hampton Mead, in the far off mountains of North Carolina. Lawrence clasped Octavia in his strong arms, and held her close to his throbbing heart, while he said in the most affectionate tones :

“My darling, it is done. A few more days, and we will know the joys and realities of earthly bliss. Then, my darling, your every wish shall be gratified. Have I not redeemed

the promise I made you one year ago?" said he, straining her to him.

"Not quite," said she, as she looked into his eyes and smiled. "I will tell you better a week hence, dear Lawrence," and she rested her head upon his bosom.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE MASK FALLS.

**I**MAGINE the lonely rock-bound coast of Cornwall, with no appearance of life to redeem the dull monotony of the everlasting waves, as they lash themselves into fury against the dark-gray rocks of an old tumble-down castle, which has not been inhabited for years. A more isolated spot could scarcely be found. A massive wall that surrounded the castle on three sides had lately been repaired. No vessel of any kind ever came near this dreary ocean prison; not even light fishing-crafts hardly ever hove in sight of it.

One dismal, dreary winter night, a carriage drew up at this old castle, and Lawrence Hastings alighted and knocked sharply upon the great iron gate with the head of his cane. Going back to the carriage, he said to his wife:

“My love, it is growing very dark and chill;

we will stop here over night, and go on next morning. I know the old couple who stay here, and we shall be treated with great courtesy."

"Lawrence, what is that dull, mournful sound I hear? It chills my very soul!" said Norva, with a sickening shudder.

"The wind is high, love, and it is the waves lashing against the rocks and walls of the castle," said Lawrence, lightly.

"Oh, husband! I shall die, if I have to listen to that sound long; I would rather go on to your beautiful home, and be exposed to the rain and storm on the road, than to seek shelter here."

"Do not be nervous and unreasonable, my darling," said Hastings, in a tone of anxiety. "In the morning the wind and rain will have ceased, and we shall soon reach our destination. Then you will feel ashamed of your cowardice. There is little romance in your composition, I fear; for my part, I love to listen to the sound that is so disagreeable to you. The more noise the waves

make as they beat against the rocks, the sweeter the music is."

Just then the gate flew open, and a man appeared carrying a lantern.

"What is wanted?" said a deep, gruff voice, with a strong foreign accent.

Hastings went forward, and said :

"Ah! Delgado! is that you?"

"Who calls my name?" said the man thus addressed.

"Have you forgotten me, my kind old friend?" said Lawrence, laughing.

"Oh, now I know you, Mr. Hastings. Come in out of this storm; it is fearful. I thought you were in America. My old wife will be overjoyed to know that you have returned. I suppose you are on your way to your old home, the Morelands? But come in. By yourself, as usual?" said Delgado, and he turned his swarthy face away from the light he held in his hand as he spoke.

Hastings gave a low, soft laugh, as he replied :

"No, Delgado, I am not alone; my wife is with

me; and as the storm is severe, I hope you and your wife can give us comfortable shelter for the night."

"Of course, signor. We always have a room for you; and my good wife will be delighted to hear there is a fair signora. But the storm increases. Come in, Signor Hastings."

Lawrence went up to the carriage door and opened it, saying, "Alight, dear Norva; you will soon be secure from the storm, within the walls of Castle Rook."

Norva obeyed her husband; and as her small feet came in contact with the ground, a cold sensation pervaded her whole being, and she clung to her husband's arm. They passed through the gate, and it swung shut with a dull, heavy sound. A moment more and they entered the portals of Castle Rook.

They were met in the wide corridor by old Jessine, who started back in well-feigned surprise, saying, "Can this be Signor Hastings? It is months since we have seen your handsome face

and sweet Mademoiselle Stanley." She gave Norva a keen, sharp look, and said, "Not Mademoiselle Stanley?"

"No," Hastings hastened to say; "this beautiful lady is my wife, Jessine, whom I found in the wilds of America since last you saw me, and we claim your hospitality for the night. I know, as of old, you will make us welcome."

"That we will, Monsieur Hastings. Come right in to this room, where we have a good fire; Madam looks cold and tired."

As the old woman spoke she opened a door to her right, bade them enter, placed her candle on the table, and drew a large easy-chair for Norva up near the fire; then telling her guests to make themselves comfortable, went out to prepare their supper. Jessine shot a meaning look in Lawrence Hastings' face as she was leaving the room, and he smiled blandly back in her face.

When she was gone, Hastings said, "Is this not better than being exposed to the storm and darkness?" and he took her cold hands in his and looked down into her frightened eyes.

“Yes, better,” she replied, wearily; “but, oh! how sadly the sea beats against the walls! We must leave this place early in the morning; shall we not? That old French woman frightens me with her evil-looking face.”

Lawrence laughed a soft, low laugh, and said, “Yes, darling, we will leave here early in the morning, and reach Morelands for breakfast. My people will be greatly disappointed because we did not get there to-night; but it cannot be helped.”

In a little while old Jessine returned to the room bearing a large tray of cold meats, fish, rolls, and rich coffee.

For less than ten minutes after her meal Norva reclined in her chair, and a strange, sweet feeling stole over her, and in a little while was in a deep sleep; so profound was her slumber she forgot all her troubles and fears of the old castle and the grim face of old Dame Delgado.

When Lawrence saw how profoundly she was sleeping, he went to the door and motioned old Jessine to follow him. When they were out of

the room, he said, "You have been faithful to me, Jessine. Do you and Delgardo prove as faithful in the future as you have in the past, and your reward shall be munificent. Let us find the old man, and I will pay you and him the price agreed upon."

"Many thanks, monsieur," said Jessine. "You can trust Delgardo and me! Did I not nurse you at my breast in your infancy? Shall I desert you now?"

When they reached the room in which Delgardo was seated, smoking his pipe by the fire, Hastings drew a roll of bank notes from his pocket and handed them to Delgardo.

"More will be furnished you bye-and-bye. You have full instructions—follow them. I have no time to lose. Everything is settled," he said, quickly, and left the old man and woman and returned to the room where he left his wife.

Norva's head had fallen back, and her face was pale as death. Lawrence took her hand; it was as cold as ice. He removed all her jewels from

her person, took her purse from her pocket, and the costly ruby comb from her head, placing them in the breast-pocket of his coat, and, with a low, mocking bow, said, "Fare thee well, Mrs. Lawrence Hastings! Where and when shall we next meet?" and, with a fiendish smile darkening his face, glided from the room.



## CHAPTER XX.

## I WILL WAIT.

**I**T was a lovely summer's day. The sun shone down on Glen Park with full brilliancy. The merry birds sang from the branches of the leafy trees, and all nature seemed to rejoice. The scent of new-mown hay, mingled with the delicate odor of blossoms, was wafted by the soft summer breeze into Lady Hester Spotswood's sitting-room. A very pretty room it was—large, light and airy, with a southern aspect, and furnished with exquisite taste. The view from the open window was beautiful in the extreme. You could look far off over fields of sweet-scented hay, and also have a gaze on a lovely flower garden where thousands of sweet flowers unfolded their fragrance to the breeze.

Lady Hester, the stately half-breed, is not looking at the meadows or the flowers. She is gazing

intently on a graceful figure robed in white muslin, playing with a sunny boy eighteen months old. A shadow gathers over the lady's face, and low, half inaudible words fall from her lips; then aloud she says: "How very beautiful my darling Amy is! Is there another in England half so fair? and her child, my great-grandchild, he, too, is beautiful. But he has the face of Walter Hampton! O God! where is thy justice! Where is the vile destroyer of my granddaughter? Where is the father of that boy?" Lady Hester set her teeth together and murmured: "I WILL WAIT."

Soon Amy came slowly on to the house, leading her boy by the hand. She sought Lady Hester, and said:

"Dear grandma, little Alfred can tell you his name. Is he not bright for a child of eighteen months? Here, darling, tell grandma your name."

The little fellow went up to Lady Hester, took hold of her hand, and said:

"I named Alfred Hampton."

“Yes, you *are* a Hampton, but like your poor foolish mother, you have no right to the name you bear. It is not your fault, little one,” said she, stooping and gathering him to her bosom, while tears stole softly down her cheeks and fell upon the young head she was caressing. He looked up into her face with his innocent baby-eyes, and she saw an expression that reminded her of her dear child sleeping in her humble grave far away in Virginia. Amy saw this look of tenderness that swept over her grandmother’s usually cold, proud face, and going to her side, fell upon her knees and buried her golden head on her bosom, and said:

“Oh, dear grandma, let me go back to America! Why did you tear me from him I love so dearly! If you knew how my poor heart aches for one more look on his dear face—to hear again his tender voice calling me Amy. Oh, for those few blissful months we spent together in the mountain cave! for these I would gladly exchange all this grandeur. Grandmother, have pity on me; for two years you have kept me from him!”

Lady Hester sprang to her feet and commenced to walk the floor.

“Amy Le Clare! how can you have the face to come to me with *such* a request? Would you go back to that man, and begin again a life of sin and shame? I have already done more than most women would have done. I have taken you to my heart again, and will do all I can for you and your son. In a few years I will have passed away; then all this vast wealth will be yours and his, to do with as you see fit; but I cannot permit you to return to Walter Hampton even if he asked it. Do you not know, simple child, that he has forgotten you long ago, and perhaps taken to himself a lawful wife?”

“No, grandmother; *he has not forgotten me; he will have no wife but me; he is the father of my child,*” cried Amy, almost frantic with grief.

“It is plainly to be seen by any one who has ever seen his handsome, treacherous face, that he is the father of Alfred,” said Lady Hester, coldly, as she went out, leaving her granddaughter and little Alfred alone.

Amy was more beautiful now than when we first met her at the spring in the Carolina mountains. She still retained all the sweet girlish beauty that Walter so admired, now heightened by the tender and holy love of motherhood. When left alone with her child, she gathered him to her heart, and said: "Oh, little one! has your father forgotten me? It must be as grandma says; if not, why does he not come to me? I have written to him so many times, telling him of my whereabouts and of your birth, and yet he does not seek me, does not even write to me. Yes, little one, it must be so—and the stain will never be lifted that rests upon your innocent head, for your poor mother's lips are sealed by an oath. God pity us, my child!" Then she wailed out: "Walter! Walter! would that you had let me die when you took me insensible from the cold waters of the river. Then there would have been no dear little baby to bear the shame and stigma of our unfortunate marriage." Then hope whispered, Write again: perhaps he did not receive

your letters. "Yes," she said; "I will write again, and bribe old Susette."

She did so; but that letter shared the fate of all the others she had written. Susette gave it to Lady Hester, who consigned it to the flames, unopened.

Another dreary six months went by, and it had been one year since Lawrence Hastings had taken his departure from Castle Rook in storm and darkness, and left his wife a captive, to pine her life away in that old ocean prison. But where, all this time, was her devoted father, that he did not seek her out and save her from him she called her husband?

## CHAPTER XXI.

## BAD NEWS.

THE soft, misty shadows of the Indian summer were hanging over the mountains. The forest trees were clothed in all their glorious splendor of gay autumn tints. Lawyer Byrd, as he rode out of the grounds of Hampton Mead, muttered to himself: "It is very strange Mr. Hampton made the will he did, giving all his vast wealth to Mrs. Hastings, and in case of her death without issue, to her husband. I cannot understand it! I cannot bear the thought of this place falling into the hands of Lawrence Hastings!" and as his eyes wandered over the lovely park with its rare beauty, he sighed to think how many changes had come to the occupants of Hampton Mead in the last two years. "I dread to make known the mission upon which I have come!" he said, as he rode slowly along up the

smooth broad drive to the mansion. He met Isom Turner, who had been airing the rooms, with a huge bunch of keys in his hand on his way to the overseer's house.

When Isom saw Mr. Byrd, he hastened to meet him with a broad, good-natured smile on his black face. There was not a negro on the place that did not rejoice at Mr. Byrd's coming, for when he visited them it was to read letters from the dear ones over the sea. It had been several months since any letters had come to their waiting, anxious hearts. The smile on Isom's face vanished when he saw the look of gloom resting on the lawyer's usually merry face; and he quickly said:

“What news, Marster Byrd?”

“Bad news, Isom! bad news! Your old master is dead; and your beautiful young mistress is hopelessly insane!”

“For de lub ob heben, Mars' Byrd! what is dis you tells me? My old marster dead! an' my dear young Miss Norva gone 'stracted! an' poor Massa Walter; I 'spects he is dead, too! I's



awfully grieved to hear dis very disagreeably news, Mars' Byrd. I just t'ink it will be de winding up blow to my old 'oman Silvia, for she is just wrapt up in dem chillen."

"I expect the news will fall heavily on Aunt Silvia," said Mr. Byrd, kindly; "but let us go on down to the quarters and call all hands to the house."

Before they had gone far, old Silvia saw them coming, and hastened to meet them. Her old black face lighted up with joy when she recognized the lawyer, but when she had drawn nearer, so that she could read the expression of his face, she paused, and a gray, ashen hue settled over her face, as she said:

"Marster Byrd, you has bad news for us dis time; I can see it in your 'spression; I has felt it coming; shadows casts der 'vents afore 'em. I saw de new moon ober my left shoulder last night, and I dream one ob Mars' Walter's dogs rolled on his back last night in front ob me, and Belle, his brudder, gib three prolonged howls dis morning.

The doves an' whipperwills have been telling me ob coming sorrow."

"You must not be so superstitious, Aunt Silvia!" said Mr. Byrd, gently. "But you are right in regard to the news I bring you. Isom will tell you. I will go on, as I see the overseer coming to meet me."

This overseer was none other than Wilks, whom we have once before mentioned in our first chapter. He had come to this country with Mr. Hampton, and was a sharer with him in beautifying the lovely home of Hampton Mead, and as he had proved a good and faithful servant over a few things, Mr. Hampton had made him overseer of his large plantation, and business manager in general at Hampton Mead. And indeed Wilks McCard had not only the regard and respect of Mr. Hampton, but of every other person on the place. He was getting on in years now, being many years older than Mr. Hampton.

McCard was a tall, old white-haired Scotchman, and with his keen, good figure, and measured walk,

polished silver shoe-buckles and military hat, had quite a venerable appearance. Wilks met the lawyer with outstretched hands, and welcomed him in the name of his absent master. Without a word, Mr. Byrd handed him a letter he had that morning received from Lawrence Hastings. It was brief, and ran as follows :

“LONDON, ENG., *July 10th*, 18—.

“MR. SAML. BYRD.

“DEAR SIR : It is my painful duty to inform you that Mr. Hampton, my much honored and respected father-in-law, is no more. He departed this life on the 25th of June. Cause of death—gastric fever, as you will see by the certificate I send you from his attending physician. I have had so much trouble since his death, that I could not write you before. As you know, my wife was far from well when we left America. She has never fully regained her health, and her father's death proved a fearful blow to her, from which I fear she will never recover. She has been a raving maniac ever since. The physicians say her case is a hopeless one. She is very frail. I fear

very much that by the time I write again I will have to mourn her loss. How I wish we had remained in America! If my beloved wife survives, I will take her to Hampton Mead in September, and try what old, familiar scenes can do for her. As you are my wife's lawyer, perhaps you could suggest what would be the wisest thing to do. My dear sir, believe me as ever,

“Your sorrowing friend,

“LAWRENCE HASTINGS.”

Wilks McCard, having read the letter through, folded it up and handed it back to Mr. Byrd. His hand trembled and his lips quivered, but he spoke not a word. He went slowly back to his house, and rang the plantation bell for all the hands to come in from their labor. When they were all assembled, he tolled the bell slowly and sadly several times.

The blacks did not know the meaning of this. Mr. Byrd, however, occupying an elevated position, so that all could hear him, proceeded to read Hastings' letter. When he had finished, it was heartrending to see their grief-stricken faces

and hear their outbursts of sorrow. While Mr. Byrd and McCard were trying to soothe them, a young man, with a face like death, and lips compressed, staggered, rather than walked, up to Mr. Byrd and fell at his feet in a swoon. In a moment another outburst came from the lips of the multitude at the sight of their young master, Walter Hampton. In their joy at seeing him again they forgot their sorrow for a time. But their joy was soon turned to wailing, for just then two officers rode up, and one of them said :

“Where is Walter Hampton? He is our prisoner.”

“*Your prisoner!*” exclaimed Mr. Byrd, coldly. “Mr. Flowers, what do you mean? Is Walter Hampton charged with any crime? Who is his accuser?”

“Yes, sir,” said Flowers. “He is charged with the murder of a young girl bearing the name of Amy Le Clare. At present it is not necessary to make known the name of his accuser, or state who it is that has preferred charges against him.”

## CHAPTER XXII.

## CASTLE ROOK.

FOR a time we will leave Walter in his prison cell at B——, until we visit Castle Rook in Cornwall, and see how long Norva Hastings slept after old Jessine had given her the drug in her coffee on the night of her arrival.

It was late in the afternoon of the next day, when she opened her eyes and found herself alone, lying on a bed in a room, the windows of which looked out on the great dark sea. The storm of the night previous had passed away, but the waves still rose and fell in angry tumult as they dashed against the rocks. At first, Norva could not remember where she was, and as she attempted to leave her bed, fell back on her pillow, weak and faint. The powerful drug had left her as helpless as a little child, and in a low voice she repeatedly called her husband's name,

but received no reply, and only the dull sound of the waves, as they washed the walls, reached her anxious ear.

In the course of an hour the door opened, and old Jessine came in, bearing a tray with some food. Norva looked at her and trembled, her nerves were so excited by the drug she had taken, and the hard face of the old woman struck terror to her heart, as she said :

“Where is Mr. Hastings? Where is my husband?”

The old woman almost laughed, as she said :

“Your husband, Mademoiselle Hastings, has concluded to leave you here for a few days with me, as he was suddenly called away on very important business last night.”

“Mr. Hastings gone and left me here, alone in this horrible place! Oh! it cannot be! I shall go mad if he does not come and take me back to London, to my father!”

The old dame set her tray down on a table, and turned and faced this sweet, beautiful mountain

flower. She folded her fat hands on her breast, and a dark, threatening look settled over her face as she said :

“ Madam, I will not deceive you longer. *You will never leave Castle Rook alive.* It is Monsieur’s intention to keep you here. Old Delgado and myself are your jailors. We are paid to detain you, and I may as well tell you, first as last, that Monsieur has no estate in this part of the country. There is no such place as the Morelands. When he left London, it was only to bring you here. This close confinement, coupled with the damp sea-air, will soon cut the delicate thread by which your life hangs, and my foster child will be free to wed Mademoiselle Stanley—the most beautiful woman in England. In addition, he will have all your great wealth. Now, madam, take my advice and make up your mind to bear your imprisonment with patience, for there is no chance of escape for you.”

Norva, at this announcement, summoned all her strength, and in great excitement sprang from her bed and cried :



“Old woman, it is false! My husband is not the wretch you paint him to be; and, if he were, my father will seek me out and rescue me from this terrible place. Mr. Hastings cannot keep me here long. My father will soon miss me.”

“Can’t he, *though?*” said old Jessine. “Tell me how your father will find you, here in Cornwall, when he himself is a prisoner near Manchester?”

“My father a prisoner! and for what?” said Norva, with wild, starting eyes.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Jessine, “you are *so* dull, madam. Sit down here and quiet yourself, and I will tell you something. Monsieur Lawrence Hastings is poor. He loves Mademoiselle Stanley better than his own soul. When he met you and found you were a great heiress, they formed a plan to become the possessors of all your wealth, and this could not be accomplished without a marriage between you and Monsieur Lawrence. You have a brother whom Monsieur feared, and his main object in life, at that time, was to get rid of that brother, and he succeeded in having him

disinherited, and in a few months he will fill a cell in some prison. Delgardo and I know all Monsieur's plans. Madam, I tell you again, make the best of your imprisonment. The news of your father's death will be forwarded to America, and also the report of your hopeless insanity; and a few months later, the report of your death will follow. Then Monsieur Hastings will come into full possession of all the Hampton wealth; then Delgardo and old Jessine will never know want again."

Here the old woman paused for breath, and Norva said :

"On what ground will my brother occupy a prison cell?"

"Murder!" hissed old Jessine. "He has murdered a fair young girl in America, named Mademoiselle Le Clare; and Monsieur Hastings will see that he is hung for it!" cried the old hag, with a fiendish laugh.

This last piece of news was too much for

Norva's terribly shocked nerves, and she threw her hands to her head, and with a piercing scream fell senseless to the floor.

Jessine retired, using no effort to bring the poor sufferer to; and the night was far advanced when she came to herself again. Oh! the horror of her awakening, when she realized her awful situation! She felt that she had been betrayed by the wiles of a villain, and was completely in his power. He had laid his plans well, by which to secure the Hampton wealth and further his wicked designs. Norva's father, "a prisoner near Manchester;" her dear brother Walter, confined in a criminal's cell far away in America, and herself a prisoner in this sea-girt castle far from friends and home. "Home!" How sweet the word sounded as she murmured it to herself in utter helplessness, thinking how she would like to be within the walls of Hampton Mead again a free and happy girl, with her darling father and noble brother!

At last she said to Jessine, "Where are my

jewels? Where have you put them? Return them to me at once!”

Old Jessine laughed, and said, “You will have to call on Monsieur for your jewels and purse; he took them with him to London.”

Poor Norva! Now all the scenes came up to her that she had witnessed between Lawrence and Octavia, and she hid her face in her hands and wept the bitterest tears of her young life, while she thought how she had been betrayed by him whom she had loved and trusted. Alas! he had violated his obligations, and by his own infamy set the seal of a villain upon his own Cain-like brow.

“Ah! if the old woman tells the truth,” thought she, “I am really doomed to remain here until death frees me! But no! the God whom I have loved and obeyed all my life will not suffer me to perish here. By His divine and unseen help I will escape, and live to confront my wretched husband! Oh! Lawrence! Lawrence!” at last broke from her pale lips, “why did I ever love

and trust you—you who have consigned me to such a place to die? But I will not die! I will live for my father and brother!”

Norva turned to the old woman, and said, “Leave me; I wish to be alone.”

A grim smile hovered over the face of old Jessine Delgado, as she complied with Mrs. Hastings’ request.

When Norva was alone, she fell upon her knees and prayed God to give her strength to endure her great sorrow that had been sent upon her; she prayed that some way would be provided for her escape.

God surely answers prayer; but eighteen months passed, and still Norva was at Castle Rook, and her strength had begun to fail. In all this time she had seen no one, save Jessine and old Delgado. No sound had penetrated her ears, save the harsh voices of her jailors and the continual dash, dash, of the waves, and the cry of the seagull, as it flapped its wings against her window. Many times she had been upon the eve of throw-

ing herself from her window into the dark waters below her; but as often she would say, "No, I will wait, and trust in God a while yet." Then thoughts of Lawrence would rise up before her, and she would say, "Was it for this I gave all for thee? Oh, man, where is thy shame!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

LIND HURST.

SNOW and ice glittered in the pale, English sunlight as Amy and her little son drove along the road in a pony phaeton, some four miles from Glen Park. The flowers had all faded and died; the hedges were leafless, and sent forth no delicate perfume; but the landscape was beautiful, and poor Amy enjoyed the view very much. She had never been so far from the Park since her residence there began, two years ago and over.

A little further on they came upon a lovely place on the left—a large, white stone building, surrounded by a beautiful grove of tall, graceful trees, protected by a high stone wall. Amy turned to the groom who was attending her, and said, “James, what place is this to our left?”

“Oh!” he said, “that is Dr. Hurst’s private infirmary for the insane, and it is called Lind

Hurst. It is too lovely a place to be devoted to anything so sad," he said, with a shake of the head; "and it is rumored there are many who go there that do not have diseased minds."

"You do not mean to say any one would go there of their own accord, and when it was not necessary," said Amy, in surprise; for there was something so terrible to her mind in one being shut up in such a place during a person's sanity, that she shuddered.

"Oh, no! they don't go there of their own accord," said James; "they are sent there because they are in the way. There was a rich lord as married a fair, sweet girl, and in time he grew tired of her, and had her put in Lind Hurst. After she had been there five years she escaped, and came to Glen Park; that was during the Earl's time. She told him her story, and he kept her concealed until she could hear from her friends. As soon as they found out where she was, they came and took her away. We never heard what became of her after that; at least, I did not."



Amy let her ponies walk slowly along the hedge-road, and kept her eyes strained to catch a glimpse of some of the inmates, but could not. She thought, "There are many poor creatures more wretched than myself. Oh, Walter! how could you treat me so! when I love you so dearly; and shall love you while I live. But my trust is gone."

At a sudden turn in the road they met a carriage drawn by two splendid black horses, that pranced in handsome silver-mounted harness. The carriage had one occupant, a man, perhaps forty years of age, with dark eyes, hair and beard. His features were cast in the most delicate mould. Soft, sweet, sunny smiles rippled over the face of this Apollo, as he lifted his hat politely to Amy, and then passed on. "His face has the beauty and softness of a leopard in repose," thought Amy; then, beckoning for James to come up, she asked:

"Do you know that gentleman?"

"Yes, Miss Amy! that was the proprietor of Lind Hurst—Dr. Hurst himself!"

“I thought so!” said Amy. “But we have gone far enough; let us turn and go back, or grandmother will become uneasy at my long absence. She is expecting papers from America to-day, and I am anxious to look them over with her.”

She turned her ponies' heads in the direction of Glen Park again, and as she passed Lind Hurst, kept a keen, sharp watch fixed upon it as before, but saw no one.

They had nearly passed the high stone wall, when a small white stone fell at the feet of the ponies and caused them to turn to one side of the road. Amy had seen it on its flight before it fell, and was sure it came from the other side of the wall.

“Here, James, alight and hand me that stone or whatever it may be,” she said, in some excitement.

James got off his horse and picked it up, and handed it to her. It was a sheet of writing paper rolled around a small stone. Amy, with trembling fingers, opened the paper, smoothed it out,

and read that which caused the color to leave her beautiful face, and her blood to run cold in her veins.

Let us look over her shoulder and read with her:

“For God’s sake! whoever gets this, try to rescue me from this horrible place! Enemies have had me placed here, and have sent the report of my death to America, so that they may get full possession of my property. Try to save me, for the love of heaven! My name is Alfred Hampton, of North Carolina, in the United States. Whoever gets this, try to get inside; carry a white rose in your hand, and I will know I have a friend.”

When Amy finished reading it, she pressed her lips together and thought: “Mr. Hampton, *I* will go to your rescue! *I* will give you your liberty! Amy Le Clare, the poor half-breed’s grandchild, who loved your son so much, will save you, for the sake of this little one at my side. I will do this to repay Walter for the pure and happy days we spent together before

grandmother tore me from him. Where is he now? why does he not write? has he forgotten me? will he ever know he has a son?

“James, are you a true friend of mine?” said Amy. “Would you keep a secret for me, and aid me in something if it lay in your power to do so?”

“I would do anything to aid a relative of Lord Glenmore.”

“Then do not tell my grandmother of this letter. There is one in deep distress within these walls—one whom she has known in America, but she would not try to get him out, I fear, and would try to prevent me from doing so if she suspected his presence there.”

“Some relative,” thought James, “that my grand Lady Hester does not like. Miss Amy, do not think me impertinent, but is this from a lady?”

“No, James, it is a gentleman much older than yourself, and relation of my boy.”

“It’s enough, Miss Amy. I will do all I can

for you," said James, with deep respect, for the servants at Glen Park all loved this fair, sweet girl very dearly, and idolized her child.

Lady Hester had told them when she first came to Glen Park, that she had taken Amy from the father of her child because he was unworthy of her, and they all looked upon her as a wedded wife, but knew not the name of her husband. Little Alfred never put Hampton to his name, unless when told to do so by his mother.

When Amy reached home she found Lady Hester deeply interested in her mail. She had received several American papers, and a letter from her lawyers, Sparks & Wind, and it was highly necessary, they said, that she should be in Wilmington the first of the coming April. In one of the latest Wilmington papers she read the following notice:

"The trial of young Walter Hampton, for the murder of Miss Le Clare, is put off until the April term, when he expects to produce witnesses to prove his innocence."

This paper Lady Hester burned, for fear Amy might also see this notice. Amy, however, took little interest in the papers when she found there was no letter for her. In the following week, Lady Hester was on her way to Wilmington, with a promise made to Amy that she would endeavor to see Walter Hampton.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## TRAPPED.

A HAPPY smile played over the face of Dr. Hurst, a month later, as he met his friend, the elder Hastings, who had called to see how his victim was getting along, and to pay the doctor for his valuable services.

“So you say your patient is failing rapidly,” said Hastings, with a degree of great satisfaction, stroking his beard.

“Yes,” said the doctor, “he seems to be suffering from a low fever, and keeps his bed most of the time.”

“That is well, doctor. Now, tell me how you are making it with the golden-haired blonde you wrote to me about some weeks ago.”

“Splendidly!” said the doctor. “She is a little widow, and you know a man can get along faster in courtship with one of those angels, than with

one who has never been married. Hastings, it is strange that I have lived to be as old as I am, and never loved a woman before. This beautiful creature, besides not being twenty yet, is one of the wealthiest heiresses in England, Lady May Glenmore, of Glen Park. Her grandmother has gone to the United States, and I am admitted to her presence every day, and sometimes she comes here to superintend some improvements I am making at her suggestions. I am looking forward with great pleasure to my early marriage. It will be before Lady Hester comes home, as she is bitterly opposed to Lady May's marrying again. But tell me, where is Lawrence?"

"He and his bride are in Rome now. They will return to London in the spring, and then leave England and take up their abode in America. Now I must be off, as I have to make a visit down in Cornwall. When I return again, a month later, I hope to meet the beautiful Mrs. Hurst," and Hastings departed, little dreaming that the lovely Lady May was Amy Le Clare, his own daughter,



and that she was planning, through Dr. Hurst's weakness for herself, to save the man of all the rest of the world he wished to see dead.

At this same moment, Amy was trying to form a plan by which to rescue the poor man from the dark, gloomy walls where he had spent over a year.

Mr. Hampton now fully understood why Walter disliked Lawrence Hastings; it was something that Walter could read in his nature that had been hid from himself and his poor unfortunate daughter.

After Amy had puzzled her brain for some time, she rang the bell and told the woman that answered it to send James to her; when he had come, she said :

“James, I wish you to ride for your life to Lind Hurst, and tell Dr. Hurst to come to me at once, that I am ill and have a request to make of him. He will not refuse, I know. Then, hasten back, and go to your room and put on the disguise I have there for you. Do not fail to carry a white rose in your hand.”

When James was gone, Amy said: "How fortunate that James is so tall! and what a blessing that I came across that package of drugs yesterday! They are harmless, and I can but try, and God be with me in my effort."

It was late at night when James came back. He was accompanied by the soft, sweet-smiling doctor. Amy was reclining on a sofa; her pale, golden hair streamed over the pillow, and her pure, lovely cheeks burned with excitement, and her eyes shone with a light born of a holy purpose.

The doctor fell upon one knee at her side and said:

"Lady May, I am your slave; what can I do for you?" He felt her pulse, and looked in her strangely brilliant eyes. She never flinched. "You are terribly nervous, my love," he said. "What is it?"

"Lady Hester will be at Glen Park soon. I had a letter from her to-day. What will she say when she comes, and finds out that you are visiting me?"

“Is that it, my love?” said the doctor, smiling to think how this fair young creature confided in him.

Lifting her eyes to his face, she said: “Dr. Hurst, how long can you remain away from your patients to-night, and stay with me? I am so nervous.”

“Until you are better, Lady May, if it is until morning,” said the doctor, softly.

“I am so glad,” said Amy. “We will have coffee together for the first time. I will make it myself, if you will let me rise,” and she gave him one of those winning smiles that men find so hard to resist.

When she was gone, the doctor leaned back in his chair and gave himself up to sweet, pleasant thoughts of the time when Lady May would be his wife. “And that day is not far distant,” he said to himself, as Lady May made her appearance, followed by a servant bearing a tray, with two steaming cups of coffee and some sweetmeats. When they were placed upon the table, the doctor arose

and placed a chair for the lovely woman he hoped to call his wife, and seating himself on the opposite side, so he could take in all her rare, sweet beauty, said :

“How nice it will be, Lady May, when you are my wife: we will take our meals at our own private table.”

Amy smiled back on him, but made no reply. All the time her heart beat so fast and loud she feared he would hear it.

“What delicious coffee, Lady May! I never remember to have drunk better. I will trouble you for the second cup.”

This was something she had not expected, and she arose and said :

“This is our own little private supper. I will get the coffee myself.”

She feared to give him more of the drug, and she feared to give him strong coffee without it, for fear it would prove an antidote for the drug she had already given him. When she returned with the two cups filled again, he saw

she was deathly pale; and he arose and came to her side at once.

“My dear Lady May, you are ill; lean on me.”

“No; it is nothing,” said she, smiling faintly; “I am like you, I need another cup of coffee to brace my nerves. I was thinking of Lady Hester.”

“All this will soon be past, Lady May,” said the doctor, as he drained his cup for the second time.

When the little supper was finished, Amy said, with a bright smile, “Dr. Hurst, have I ever played for you?”

His eyes gleamed with delight, as he said, “No, Lady May; you never have. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to hear you sing, unless it were to call you my wife,” and the doctor sat down, and watched the delicate fingers as they touched the strings of her Spanish guitar.

Before she had finished singing one verse of a sweet old ballad, he was murmuring, “Oh! how sweet!” and fast sinking into a deep sleep.

At last his head fell back on the divan on which he had been reclining, and Amy knew the sun would be high in the heavens when he awoke.

She arose, laid her guitar aside, and looked down on this sleeping leopard, and a look of scorn and loathing stole over her face and flashed from her eyes.

“Poor idiot!” she said, as she went and touched the bell-pull.

In a moment there was a low knock at the door; she went and opened it softly. She started back, and a half-smothered scream escaped her pale lips. Was she dreaming? or did Dr. Hurst stand before her?

She cast a sudden look in the direction of the divan; there the doctor lay like one dead.

“Come in, James; it is now one o'clock. You know the room. Take the keys from Dr. Hurst's pocket; put on his great coat and be off, and God be with you. This man will not awaken until twelve to-morrow, and there is much to be accomplished in that time. Take the doctor's horse,

and leave him at Lind Hurst. You and your companion must walk back to Glen Park, and may God speed you," said she, sinking on her knees and praying God to crown her efforts with success.

The dull gray dawn of a winter's morning was just streaking the eastern horizon when old James returned to Glen Park, and ushered in a pale, weary, white haired man. His form was bent as if by age, but it was grief and starvation. This man was the once hale, noble-looking Mr. Hampton, of Hampton Mead.

Amy met them in the hall, and her sweet voice rang out with joy and praise, as she said, "Thank God! Mr. Hampton, you are free from the walls of Lind Hurst. Now you must away to London, and hide yourself from your enemies; for when the doctor awakens he will suspect something, and it will not be long until he will have his blood-hounds on your track. First take a glass of wine and some refreshing food, and then try to get a few hours repose; then you can breakfast, and reach Manchester as soon as possible."

The old man was too weak to express his thanks to this brave girl then. He took her advice; she led him herself to a warm, pleasant room, where he could lie down on a soft bed and sleep. He soon fell into a deep slumber, with a blessing on his lips for this lovely woman with hair like spun gold.

The little French clock on the mantel-piece was on the point of striking ten, when Mr. Hampton opened his eyes. He started, a low moan escaped his lips, as a vision, like what his son Walter was at two years of age, stood looking at him.

“What is your name, little one?” said Mr. Hampton, sadly.

The child held out its little hand, and said:

“My name is Alfred Hampton, and so is yours. My mamma say you is my danpapa;” and in a moment more the little fellow flew to his mother and said: “Danpapa is dead!”

“Oh, my darling, did you go into his room? I have been so busy preparing him some nourishment I had forgotten you,” and she hastened to



Mr. Hampton's room, where she found he had fainted. She used every restorative she could think of. At last she was rewarded by hearing a deep-drawn sigh, and seeing his eyes open. Her heart throbbed, for was not this Walter's father?

"Who are you?" he said, in a deep whisper.

"I am Amy Le Clare, Hester Spotswood's granddaughter."

"*You* Amy Le Clare! Oh! God! and was it for such a creature as you I banished my only son! But how came you here? I thought you dead."

"It is a long story," said Amy, "and I would rather not tell you, for you have no time to lose."

"But that child—is he yours and Walter Hampton's?"

"He is," said Amy, in a low voice.

"Where is Walter?"

"That I cannot tell you," said Amy, while the tears stole into her eyes; "I have not seen or heard of him in over two years. My grandmother, now Lady Hester Glenmore, took me away from

our cave when Walter was absent. I have written him many letters, but have never heard from him. I shall tell you nothing more, now, until you have taken some refreshments," said Amy, in a tone of deep feeling. "After that please tell me how you came to be an inmate at Lind Hurst."

"God bless you," said Mr. Hampton: "you are a brave girl. May God reward you for this deed."

Even then her reward was on its way over the deep.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## HE MUST BE TAKEN.

**I**N an elegant villa overlooking the beautiful Arno, Lawrence Hastings and Octavia lived, spending Mr. Hampton's money with lavish hands. Lawrence had written to Mr. Byrd that his beloved wife, Norva, had passed away, and that he was now alone, but would be at Hampton Mead again in the spring. "And then, my darling Octavia, you shall be mine in the sight of the laws of the land, when that woman will have passed away. She cannot live at that lonely place much longer. Her father is dead by this time, I dare say. Walter will be sure to swing for the murder of my sister. If he does not, he would not think of contesting his father's will, and even if he did, I would law him to the end of my life. He will die by the law; I shall become heir to all the Hampton wealth."

“It is very strange about this sister of yours,” said Octavia; “I never remember to have heard anything about her before;” and a shadow overcast her face, and a strange light gleamed in her eyes.

“This fair-haired girl was my half-sister, nevertheless,” said Lawrence. “Octavia, you are looking pale, and this is the day we have set to visit the art gallery. Let us be off, and perhaps by the time we get back we will find letters from the old chap, bringing us good tidings,” he said, while he pressed his lips to this guilty woman’s brow.

Oh, how sad that one so beautiful should be so unwomanly as to listen to Lawrence Hastings’ dishonorable words. His father had accomplished the awful plan of having Mr. Hampton confined at Lind Hurst mad-house, and poor Norva was a prisoner at Castle Rook!

They had gone through a form of marriage when they both knew of Norva’s whereabouts. But the few that knew them in London supposed Mr. Hampton and his beautiful daughter dead. So Octavia lived with Lawrence as his wife.

The only thought that Lawrence Hastings had of Norva was, "When will old Delgado write and tell me she is dead? When will my father write and tell me Mr. Hampton also is no more? *Then* I will marry Octavia, and enter into possession of one of the first estates in America, and be happy with the only woman I ever cared for."

It is an old saying—it is darkest before dawn. It might be added that our brightest prospects are often overcast by disappointment, as will be in Lawrence Hastings' case.

He and Octavia spent the morning in one of the galleries of Florence, returning to the villa in time for lunch, which was served in a style becoming a palace. Poor Norva's money had bought all those comforts and luxuries, while she was an inmate of the lonely sea-girt castle.

Shortly after lunch, a man-servant entered with a letter. Lawrence recognized his father's handwriting at once, and his face lighted up with a great joy.

"All must be well at last," he muttered. "I

must now be master of that vast property across the sea," and he hastily broke the seal and read that which made him gnash his teeth with rage. He threw the letter from him, and a low, muttered curse escaped his compressed lips, and he said in a low voice :

"Escaped from Lind Hurst! That is something I had not looked for. That idiot of a doctor, to have the weakness to be taken in by the fair face of a woman!"

"You forget, Lawrence, that you love a woman," said Octavia, with a playful smile. "But what troubles you?" and she came to his side and took his hand as she spoke.

"More than enough troubles me, my darling. Mr. Hampton has escaped from Lind Hurst, and all through Dr. Hurst's foolish love for a woman, who by some means or other found out Hampton was there, and by a well-formed plan, and acting through the doctor's great weakness for herself, succeeded in releasing him from the asylum. Perhaps, even now, he may be on his way to

America, after my writing to that old lawyer Byrd, that he was dead, and his daughter, too. We must go to London at once, and if he has not already gone, he must be recaptured and taken back to Lind Hurst. If he reaches America, we are ruined! Now, love, prepare for this journey at once. We have no time to lose. This man must be secured, and if the worst comes to the worst, he must be silenced forever. I swear by all that I hold sacred on earth, and that is my love for you, Octavia, to possess the Hampton wealth. We will now go to London, and I will leave you in comfortable quarters, and when I return to you again, I will be as free as a bird of the air," and he strained this lovely woman to his bosom, and his eyes looked into hers.

Each could read the other's thoughts, and each could read a deadly purpose.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## AMY'S COURAGE.

LET us mark Dr. Hurst, as he opens his eyes the next morning, when the bright winter sun was high in the heavens. At first he could not tell where he was. He glanced around the room in a strange, bewildered manner, then slowly it dawned upon him where he was. Why was he there? He put his hand to his head. "Ah! I have it!" he said. "I have been drugged. For what purpose? And by whom? Could it have been by Lady May? What could be her object?" He put his hand in his pocket and felt for his keys. They were there. He arose and his head felt heavy. He went to the bell-pull and pulled it sharply. James soon made his appearance. "Look here, my man; can you tell me what has happened to me, and why I am here?"

"I cannot," said James. "Unless you drank



too much wine and overslept yourself, which probably is the case."

"Hardly," said the doctor. "Go and send your lady to me at once. Perhaps she can throw some light on the subject."

James left the room, and in a short time after, Amy made her appearance. She did not tremble with fright as some women would have done. Her face was pale and her lips were firmly compressed, her eyes glowed with a glad, triumphant light, and her heart beat fast from excitement, and not from fear of the dark villain that stood before her.

"Well! Lady May Glenmore! I have had quite a nap since three this morning, and now 'tis nearly noon. Can you account for it in any way? Your man—James, I think you call him—says I had taken too much wine. But I never take wine. I know that the coffee I drank in this room last night was drugged, and it must have been by your hands alone, as you insisted on preparing it yourself. Now, Lady May, tell me if I am not right, and what was your object."

Suddenly a strange look came over her. A look in which the deepest contempt was depicted, as she said :

“ Dr. Hurst, you are right. It was drugged last night, and it was my hands that prepared it. I will tell you my object in so doing. It was to get possession of your keys and retain you here, until I could rescue a gentleman from Lind Hurst, who has been confined there for over a year, and whose mind is as clear as yours or mine : a gentleman whom you have tried to starve and destroy. Not that he ever harmed you, but simply, because you were paid well to keep him there, with a promise to be paid better if he should die in that terrible asylum. Thank God, he is safe from your persecutions at last ! ” said Amy, as a sweet and holy smile played over her girlish face. “ I know that Mr. Hampton is in your power no more—that his days of persecution are over. I know that he is in Manchester now, where you dare not molest him, and I wish you to know that it was through *me* that all has been accomplished : through

*me*, Lady Hester Glenmore Spotswood's granddaughter. I never told you my name was Lady May Glenmore, for that is not my name. I have given you no power over me. I have simply worked on your weakness, and have succeeded in effecting Mr. Hampton's rescue from Lind Hurst and your cruel persecution. Now I will bid you good-morning, sir, as I shall be very busy for the next few days in getting the house in order to receive my grandmother, Lady Hester."

Amy was turning to leave the room, when Dr. Hurst sprang at her and attempted to grasp her hand.

"Stand back, sir, or your life shall pay the forfeit! I came to this room prepared to meet and deal with a villain. Lay but the weight of your finger upon me, and I will shoot you with as little remorse as I would some beast of prey," and the soft, delicate hand drew forth from her bosom a silver-mounted pistol, which she held firmly in her right hand ready for use, should circumstances so demand.

The doctor saw this, and recoiled a step or two back, and his generally calm, dark face became dangerous in its aspect, as he said :

“My beautiful singing bird, you have played your game well, but I will hold the trump card yet. Ere this time to-morrow I will have bagged my escaped game, and when that is done look to yourself,” and the smile of a foiled villain played over his face as Amy left the room, and he found himself alone.

He gathered up his hat and great-coat and hastily left the house. He looked for his horse. He was gone, so the outwitted ruffian was compelled to walk to Lind Hurst. When he was gone, Amy knelt and lifted her voice to God in thanks for Mr. Hampton's delivery from the hands of his persecutors.

When Dr. Hurst reached the asylum, he found his horse there, and no one seemed surprised at his absence. He did not want any of his assistants to know how a woman had foiled him, and he said to one of them :

“No. 27 escaped from me last night when I had taken compassion on him and took him out for a walk. We must get him back; he is one of the best paying patients I have. He is in Manchester. You must look after him at once, Watson; watch every avenue and see that he does not reach London. We must have him back; I say *we must*,” and a strange light came into Dr. Hurst’s eyes, and a peculiar expression settled over his handsome face.

The man addressed as “Watson” understood his meaning. Dr. Hurst wrote a few hasty lines to Mr. Hastings, and sent them to Manchester. In a few days the elder Hastings appeared at Lind Hurst, and gathered the full particulars of all that had taken place. He was wild with anger and dismay at what had occurred, and wrote at once the letter to his son which determined Lawrence’s and Octavia’s departure for London.

A month later, father and son met at the same club-rooms where we have seen them together before, when the following conversation took place.

“Cheer up, Lawrence; he is safe at Lind Hurst once more. We had a chase, I can tell you; but never fear—all is well; the way is open now for you to claim the Hampton wealth. I advise you to have Hampton removed from Lind Hurst to Castle Rook, where there is no possible chance for escape; for when his friends, whoever they are, find he is again missing, they will search for him at Lind Hurst; and that will never do. He must be carried to Castle Rook, for if there should be any trouble raised on his account, Dr. Hurst can throw open his doors and defy the law. It cannot be proven that Hampton was recaptured or that he was of sound mind when he escaped.”

“A good idea,” said Lawrence. “I am glad the old coon is safe again, and also glad that you have hit upon a plan of security. I will tell you what we must do. We will convey him to the Castle, and leave him and his daughter to work out their own salvation there. We will leave them a small quantity of provisions, and post old Delgado and Jessine. Of course the provisions will soon give out, and they cannot live long on the sea air at

Castle Rook. We have no time to lose, and must remove this man at once. Tell me who is this girl that helped Norva's father to escape?"

Old Mr. Hastings' face became as pale as death, as he said: "Amy Le Clare, or Amy Hastings, your half-sister."

Lawrence started back and gasped, as he said: "Amy Le Clare! impossible! With my own eyes I saw her dead, and her beautiful pale face has haunted me ever since I saw her lying in that mountain cave with the cold death-damp upon her cold face. There must be some mistake; your daughter Amy is dead; Walter Hampton is accused of being her murderer, and at this time is in a criminal's cell awaiting his trial," said Lawrence, thoughtfully, and a dark, gloomy look settled over his face. "But we must not stop to speculate on this question; we must get this man safe to Castle Rook, and the sooner the better. Do you go to Lind Hurst at once, and I will follow you in ten days, and in a short time we will have all safe again. This time there shall be no escaping."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## LADY HESTER IS FOLLOWED.

AFTER attending to her business with her lawyers, Lady Hester had fulfilled her promise to Amy, and visited Walter in prison. She resumed her coarse, plain clothes, not wishing it known that she now was wealthy. When she called at the jail to see Walter, every one supposed she was simply plain Hester Spotswood. To poor Walter, who had been in prison for many months, her face was as the face of an angel. All his pleading to tell him where Amy might be found was fruitless.

When Walter was released, old Silvia fell at his feet, and sobbed forth :

“Thank God, my noble boy is not a murderer! Poor old marse’ died thinking you had blood on your soul, honey, and for ober two years I has believed the same. Massa Walter, will you forgib poor old Mammy for tinkin’ dis ebil of you?”



“Yes, Mammy Silvia, I forgive you,” said Walter. “But oh! that my poor father should have died thinking me guilty, is more than I can bear. What a broken-up family we are—father gone, and my sister too; I can hardly realize it. Then my father’s will. Lawrence Hastings is now master of Hampton Mead. It will be very hard to see the dear old home pass into other hands. The greatest blow will be to see Lawrence Hastings the master of all the blacks who have been so kindly treated, for he is a man without honor or feeling. However, I will try to earn money enough to purchase you and Isom. Would to heaven it was in my power to save you all from this man! I am going away now; perhaps when I return, I will be able to save them all.”

When Hester Spotswood left for Wilmington, Walter went on the same stage-coach with her, but so well disguised, that she had no suspicion that the old, white-haired man, with his eyes shaded by a pair of green spectacles, was the handsome Walter Hampton.

Colonel Field, of Cedar Vale, had made himself Walter's banker for the time, and consequently he found himself not without money, and ready to follow Lady Hester to almost any place she might go.

When they reached Wilmington, what was Walter's surprise to see Hester at the hotel, dressed in a rich black satin dress, with soft, rich lace at her throat and wrists! This dress was very becoming to this queenly woman. Walter was still more astonished next day, when he followed her on board a vessel bound for Liverpool. He also took passage in the same vessel.

It was a beautiful spring evening when Lady Hester reached Glen Park, and found Amy and her little son awaiting her. There was an anxious, yearning look on Amy's face, and her eyes burned with excitement, as her grandmother drew her to her heart.

Amy was dressed in a delicate rose-colored silk, with rich, creamy lace at her delicate white throat, with white roses in her golden hair and upon her

bosom. Never had she appeared so beautiful to Lady Hester as she did on this evening of her arrival from America, and her heart ached for the lovely creature as she gazed upon her tender, suffering face, and thought of Walter Hampton's great anxiety to know where Amy was.

"No wonder he loves this fair girl," she murmured, and her conscience smote her for not having told Walter.

She saw the troubled look on Amy's face, and said, "Amy, my darling, I saw Walter Hampton; he is well, and he asked about you, as to where you were living, and if you were well."

"Is that all?" said Amy, in a voice agitated with emotion. "Did he not ask about little Alfred?"

"No, my child, he did not."

Amy covered her face with her hands, and a low cry escaped her lips as she fell fainting at her grandmother's feet. Lady Hester had seen Walter, and she had hoped so much from this meeting, but it was all over now; and with that cry of

despair that escaped her lips, she surrendered up all hopes.

Lady Hester stooped to lift her up; but a strong arm pushed her back, and a deep musical voice said, "Mrs. Spotswood, this is my wife; mine shall be the hands to lift her, and my bosom henceforth her resting-place."

Lady Hester raised her eyes in a frightened manner, and beheld her stage-coach companion, the white-haired old gentleman with the green glasses, bending over the still form of Amy.

"Your wife, sir! In the name of heaven, sir, who are you?" and Lady Hester stepped back trembling, and her black eyes glowed with a strange light. Walter tore the glasses from his eyes, the gray wig from his head, and the long beard from his face. Lady Hester looked at him for a moment, then said, sharply, "Walter Hampton, what are you doing at Glen Park?"

Walter gathered Amy in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, as he said, "Mrs. Spotswood, you would give me no satisfaction concerning my wife,

so I determined to follow you and find her, if possible ;” and then he pressed his lips to Amy’s, and held her to his bosom, while he murmured, “Amy, Amy, my darling wife ! open your eyes and speak to me. My love, it is Walter, your husband.”

Lady Hester sank into a chair and said, “Are you her husband ?”

“Yes, madam, I am,” said Walter. “For heaven’s sake, get me something to recover my loved one.”

Lady Hester obeyed him, and in a few moments the brown eyes opened, and rested full upon Walter’s face ; then they closed again, and she murmured, “Is it a dream, or is it my darling husband ?”

Walter said, “Amy, my precious wife, it is no dream : I am here, your husband. It is I who hold you in my arms, as in the by-gone days in the cave of the old, dear mountains.”

At this, the eyes looked into Walter’s face, the fair, snowy arms were twined about his neck, and

the sweet voice that had power to stir his soul, as no other voice had, said, "Oh, Walter, am I dreaming, or do you really press me to your heart again as of yore, and call me your wife?"

"It is reality, my love," said Walter. "In the presence of your grandmother, I press you to my bosom and call you Wife—the sweetest and dearest name ever uttered by man."

With a low, glad cry, Amy sprang from her husband's arms, and flew to Lady Hester's side, exclaiming, "Thank God, grandmother, at last I am righted! Walter has acknowledged the bond that binds me to him. Forgive me, grandmother, for giving you one heart's pang; I have never sinned against you and my God. I promised Walter on the evening we were married, not to make it known until he first revealed it, or gave me the right to do so."

The proud half-breed bent her head, and her tall, proud form swayed like some noble tree shaken by a terrible storm, as she said:

"Ah! Amy! Amy, my child, there is much for

me to grieve over. If I had known how matters stood between you and Walter Hampton, I could have saved each of you many a heart's pang; but as it is, I rejoice that he has found you."

Amy's face suddenly beamed happily, as her little son came into the room. She raised him in her arms and bore him to his father, saying:

"Dear, dear husband, have you no word of love and welcome for your little Alfred, for our son?" and the father's face was very white, and the voice was low, deep and sad, as he said:

"Oh, God! I thank Thee for this great blessing!" Then the little fellow pillowed his brown head on his father's bosom, and his tiny hands caressed Walter's handsome face and brown locks, now prematurely threaded with silver. "Oh! Amy, my darling wife, this is a blessing I had not expected," and Walter pressed his lips to his little son's, as he said, "My dear father, if you could have lived to see my joy, and know that you had a grandson like my little Alfred!"

Amy, at this outburst, sat down beside him,

laid her hand on his knee, and told him of his father, and Lawrence Hastings' treachery. For a time, Walter sat like one bereft of the power of speech or action; then he said:

“My noble wife, what do I not owe you for this great service?”

Lady Hester arose and took Walter's hand, and bent over father and son, as she said:

“Walter Hampton, forgive me for all I have made you and Amy suffer. If I had known what I do now, I should have acted differently; but Amy refused to acknowledge that she was your wife, and I thought that I was acting for the best.”

Walter arose, kissed this stately lady, and said:

“Dear grandmother, you are forgiven freely. But tell me, how is it I find you and my wife in England, living in a style a prince might envy?”

Lady Hester told him what the reader already knows.

“And now, Walter, it was on Amy's account



that your father cast you off because you loved and married a simple American maiden. Now, she is one of the wealthiest heiresses in England, or will be when I am dead, and in the natural run of events that will not be long."

"I hope you will live many, many years," said Walter, for her kindness touched him deeply. He saw that she was truly a noble woman, for her eyes beamed with true nobility of soul as they rested upon his face, and she said:

"Now that my trust and confidence in my darling Amy are restored, I feel at this moment as if I could almost give up my revenge upon her father."

"Ah! grandmother, you will never find Amy's father," said Walter. "Try to banish him from your mind."

"Yes, I shall see him again. I have seen him several times in America, and I met him this evening as I was coming home. I would almost swear this man is Amy's father, and if so, he is preparing the rope with which to hang himself;

but we will let him pass. Now, as to this plot against your father, Lawrence Hastings sent word to Hampton Mead that he was dead, while he had him confined at Lind Hurst. Perhaps your sister shares the same fate," said Lady Hester, thoughtfully.

Walter sprang to his feet and began to pace the floor, and at length said :

"You are right, grandmother. I do not believe that Norva is dead. I must first find my father; then I will track this villain, Hastings, and compel him to tell me the truth. If I find harm has come to my sister, his life shall pay for it."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## IS THERE NO HOPE?

**T**HE winds moaned sadly, and the waves beat drearily against the old ruins where poor Norva was confined. Eighteen months had passed since that gloomy night when she entered its walls with such dreary forebodings, and in all that time no friendly face had met her anxious gaze, no word of sympathy had fallen on her ears. She had only a few books to read, and some fancy work with which to kill the hours that hung so heavily upon her hands. She had now exhausted all her resources, and could procure no writing materials, and if she could, felt no inclination to use them; for what would it avail her in that lonely sea-girt prison? She could only sit and brood over her helpless situation, and the great wrong that had been done her—and by him she

had loved so well and trusted so much, but whom she now loathed with the deepest bitterness.

“I would almost rather remain here for life, than look upon your face again,” she thought. “There is more real happiness for me in listening to the wild waves sobbing against the rocks, than there would be in hearing your voice; more beauty to look out upon the boundless waste of waters and watch the white-capped waves as they wash the castle walls, than to behold your handsome, treacherous face. If it was only me you had harmed, I could endure it with a better will; but to know that you have my dear father and my poor brother also in your toils, is too much. Thank God, I did not look upon your father’s face a few weeks ago! Ah, Lawrence Hastings! liberty would not be sweet, if it came at your hands!” she exclaimed, and she knelt at her window, and her lovely, dreamy eyes sought the moon, pale and solitary as it floated in the azure heavens; and upon which she had gazed so often since her dreary abode at Castle Rook. The moon was

almost full that night, and taking a field-glass from a rough table, she surveyed the heavens for a time, sweeping her eyes across the starlit vaults so far above her. At last she lowered her glass, and looked down on the sea. How black the waters looked below her, in the shadows of the old walls! As she stood there lost in thought—of what, we shall not say—a long, deep sob fell upon her ears. She started, and a new light shone in her dusky eyes, and her heart throbbed painfully, for a faint ray of hope had entered her weary soul. Was one of her heartless jailers ill, and if so, might she not take advantage of them and perhaps get possession of the key to the iron gate and make her escape? Oh, for glorious freedom once more!

She opened the door softly, and saw old Jessine was just coming out of the room back of hers, with a tray in her hands. Some one had been served with refreshments. Who could it be? Was it Lawrence or his father? Old Jessine lifted her head, and a grim smile played over her face, as she said:

“I have another guest, madam. Go in and see him, if you like.”

Norva made the old woman no reply, but grasped the door to prevent her from falling; while a deathly pallor came over her face. “It is either Lawrence Hastings or his father,” she thought, “and I cannot look on either of them.”

She was in the act of going back in her room, when that same noise again fell upon her ear.

“It cannot be either of the Hastings, but if a stranger, why did old Jessine bid me go to him? Would she not think I would appeal to them for help? Perhaps there is another prisoner! I will go in and see!” she muttered, as she nerved herself to knock at the door.

A low, broken voice bade her come in. She lifted the latch and entered. Near the fire, with his face buried in his thin, pale hands, sat a man with hair almost as white as snow. He did not lift his head as she entered. That strange instinct implanted in our hearts led Norva to this man’s side, and an impulse she could not resist caused her to lay her hand on his head, and say:

“Who are you? In the name of heaven, speak!”

At the tones of her voice the head was lifted, and for a moment Norva stood like one in a dream. She did not cry out; her tongue refused to perform its functions, but the man sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

“God be praised! my daughter, that I find you alive!”

The stony eyes gave him back no look of recognition, and the lips still were mute. Mr. Hampton gathered his suffering daughter to his breast, and sat down with her in his lap, while he chafed her cold hands and pressed kiss upon kiss on her lips. Then he laid her upon the rude bed and forced some water between her lips.

Just then Jessine again appeared. Mr. Hampton sprang at her and grasped her by the arm with such force that she cried out with pain. In a few moments old Delgado came in, followed by a great brawny-fisted man with a brutal face, and in a moment more Mr. Hampton lay senseless on

the floor; then they bore him from the room, while Jessine carried Norva to her dreary chamber and laid her upon her bed, locking her in, while she muttered to herself: "Madam will never look on her father's face again; he is in the tower chamber now, and will never leave it alive."

The old woman went to her room and sat down to think. Soon she was joined by her husband.

"Well, Pedro, have you got the old man safe?"

"Yes, Jessine, safe in the tower at last. I hope they will both soon give in, for I am getting tired of this place, and want to go back to London. Now that we have plenty of money to spend, I long to see some of my old chums open their eyes at the way old Pedro Delgado spends money."

"Yes, Pedro, the provisions will last yet three months; then, when that is gone, we will go; perhaps before." Then Pedro laughed a low, cruel laugh.

Ere the sun arose the next morning old Jessine went to Norva's room, and found her prisoner sitting up in bed staring wildly about her, and the poor, half-crazed creature said:



“Old woman, where am I? and where is my father?”

“You, madam, are still in Castle Rook, and your father is, I reckon, at Lind Hurst; if he is not dead.”

“No! no! he is not dead! He was here last night! I saw him in the next room after you bade me go to him.”

“You have had a strange dream, madam. There is no one in the next room. You must have been walking in your sleep some time during the night. I heard a noise and got up to see what it was; and I found you lying in the corridor. I took you up and bore you in here.”

“But, Jessine, I did see my father, and he was so terribly changed. His hair was white as snow, and his tall form was thin and bent. Yes, yes, I saw him or his ghost; but as I don't believe in ghosts, I must have seen my father. He has traced me to this place, and you have made away with him. Oh! my poor! poor father!” she cried, with a sad wail of anguish, and the eyes

that used to look so tender, burned with the awful light of insanity brought on by suffering and excitement.

For days and weeks she lay there, sick and solitary, while her father remained a prisoner in the tower chamber. He did not know she was ill. He only knew he could not get to her. He was chained to the wall like a felon or a maniac, and felt that if aid did not come soon from some quarter his frail frame would succumb, and his enemies would triumph.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

WHAT MAMMY SILVIA KNEW.

WALTER HAMPTON did not remain long at Glen Park, but went to London at once, to see if he could find any trace of his father. After weeks of fruitless search he returned to the Park, where Lady Hester suggested to him the propriety of calling on the proper authorities, and compelling Dr. Hurst to admit them in search of the missing man. Walter acted upon the suggestion, but without success.

He then thought his father might have gone home to America; and with this idea, he and Amy left their little son with Lady Hester, and set out for Hampton Mead. They reached Wilmington in due time, and then took the stage for B——.

With what different hopes and feelings Walter passed over this road now, than when following

Hester Spotswood in search of his lost wife, who now sat beside him !

When they reached B——, they secured a conveyance to take them to Colonel Field's. As they were driving slowly along, a voice, singing a song Walter had so often heard Mammy Silvia sing in his childhood, made him turn to the driver, and say, "Drive slowly, David ; I think I know that voice," and a happy light appeared in his face.

How many of us have listened to the sweet melodies of the negroes on the plantations, the memory of which brings back to us sweet recollections of the past, before the cares of life had darkened our childhood's happy days. The song that so interested Walter was this :

"I's jist on de borders ob de new Jerusalem,  
I's jist on de borders ob de new Jerusalem,  
I's jist on de borders ob de new Jerusalem,  
And I 'spects to meet my child'en dare."

"That is Mammy Silvia, and I must see her," said Walter, springing from the carriage and going to a fence, in the direction from which the

voice came. He called softly, "Mammy Silvia," and in a few moments he was answered, by seeing the old woman make her appearance from behind a clump of chestnuts, and with a glad cry on her lips, she sprang to the fence and clasped his hand, while tears of real joy rolled down her dusky cheeks.

"Oh, Mars'er Walter! I is so glad to see you is come back to save me and Isom!"

"To save you and *who*?" said Walter, kindly.

"We has been sold, Mars'er Walter, Isom and me, to Mr. Ledford."

"And who sold you, Mammy? No one had the right to do so save my father, and it is strange he would part with you. Has my father been at the Mead?"

Silvia's eyes opened with wonder at this question, and she said, "No, Mars'er Walter; old mars'er can't come from his grave ober the ocean. It was dat white-libered debil of a Hastings as sold me and Isom, and saunt Mr. Wilkes McCord higher dan eber you saunt your kite. Less dan a

month ago, dis borned he-debil and dat beautiful she-debil, Octavia Stanley, arribed at de Mead. Dey say day is man and wife. But, Mars'er Walter, come close to me, an' listen to what I has to tell you. I always said I would get eben wif dat debil, and I has; but I has kept my own counsel. No one knows what I knows, not eben Isom. A few nights arter dis two debils had arribed at de Mead, I ebe-drops, and I heard something dat makes me fink Miss Norva am still libing. I has been biding my time until you come back."

"What did you hear?" asked Hampton.

"You see, mars'er, as I said afore, arter dease two debils had been at de Mead, I was hid in de shrubbery near dem, and I heard Mr. Hastings say, 'This, my lub, pays us for all our years of plotting and planning;' and she say to him, 'Yes, Lawrence; but if she was dead, I should feel more secure, now dat her father is out of de way.' Den he say, 'My fair, queenly Octavia, hab no fears; in dat old tumble-down Castle Rook on de shores ob Carm, Com, Con someting, I couldn't zactly

cotch de meaning ob de words just what it was; but he say she will soon be out ob de way."

"Was it Cornwall?" said Walter, deeply agitated.

"Dat's it, mars'er! Cornwall! dat's it, honey! Den he made some light remarks about my young mist'ess, dat made me so mad I sprang out before dem an' said, in dat debil's face, he was a liar. I wish you could hab seen his look ob rage as I told him; if eber I saw a white debil, he was one. He sprang at me an' fell me to de ground, but as I went down I grabbed his har' wif both hands an' took him wif me, but somehow arter dat I didn't know anything for a long time. Some time arter dis setto, Mr. Hastings come to mine an' Isom's cabin, and say good to me like, 'Aunt Silvia, what did you hear last night that made you so mad, an' made you fly at me in such a passion?' 'You called my young mist'ess names,' I said, an' then to keep him from thinking I had heard more, I said kinder soft like, 'Mr. Hastings, I can't hear any one say anyfing against my dead

mist'ess.' 'Is dat all you heard, old woman?' he said, an' he looked at me sharp. 'It am all I heard, so help me heben, Mr. Hastings.' For you see, Mars'er Walter, I was afraid dat if he knew what I had heard him say, him an' dat beautiful debil would have killed me. De next day a trader comes along, an' me and Isom was sold an' had to leave de dear old Mead; but afore we reached town we met Mr. Ledford, an' I ax him to buy me an' Isom, an' he was glad ob de chance, an' in no time de bargain was struck. But no one knows what I knows, Mars'er Walter, but yourself."

"Thank God, Mammy, you were not taken away from the neighborhood. Even if you had been, you would have been traced and returned in time. Even if my sister were dead, that villain had no right to sell you, for my father is living, or was, in April. My fair, sweet wife rescued him from an insane asylum in England."

"Your wife, Mars'er Walter! Is you married?"



“Yes, Mammy. Come with me to the carriage and see if you ever saw her before. And have no fears, Mammy, for ere the sun goes down to-morrow I will purchase you and Isom, and leave you at Colonel Field’s, until I again cross the water and search for my dear sister and father.”

Walter then spoke of his beautiful boy at Glen Park, with his grandmother, Lady Hester, and Silvia laughed and cried at the same time. Silvia thought for a moment, then said:

“Did you marry a widow, Mars’er Walter?”

“No, Mammy. But here we are. Did you ever see that lady before?” said Walter, while a proud light shone from his eyes.

Silvia paused, and her eyes looked wild, as she cried:

“Miss Amy Le Clare! as sure as my name is Silvia Turner! Miss Amy Le Clare, alive sure enough! An’ she is your wife?”

“Yes, Mammy, my angel wife, and has been for over three years. It was my great love for her that made my father cast me off. He thought

I had done her a great wrong, and thinks so still. I intended to have told him all on that sad morning he drove me from home, but he was so angry and wounded he would not listen, and I had to leave him with the secret of my marriage still locked in my bosom. Speak to my wife, Mammy, and we will hasten on to Colonel Field's, and in the morning I will ride over to Mr. Ledford's and get you and old Isom."

Silvia went to Amy, and bowing low held out her hand, saying :

"I is most happy to welcome you into our family, Miss Amy, and pray dat dare is brighter days in store for us yet."

"Thank you, Aunt Silvia, I hope so," said Mrs. Hampton, kindly, as she took Silvia's hand and pressed it warmly.

As Walter was about to step into the carriage, he said, in a low tone, to Mammy :

"Tell no one that we suspect that my father and sister are living, and we will spring a trap for this villain Hastings, and that shameless creature who is with him."

“Hie, Mars’er Walter! you won’t cotch dis chile napping, honey; I knows just how we has got to deal wid de debil.”

When Walter reached Colonel Field’s he found his friend Charlie and a lovely wife. Walter introduced his wife, who was warmly received by all the family, and great was their astonishment when they learned who she was.

Walter did not mention any of the strange events that had come to his knowledge to any but his friend Charlie, and after he had told all, said:

“Now, Charlie, I want you and Cliff Wilbern to return with me to England, and help me to prosecute a thorough search for my father and sister. I will not go to the Mead now, but we will set out on the day after to-morrow for Wilmington, and catch the first vessel that leaves that port.”

“Certainly, Walter, I will aid you with all my heart.”

Next day Charlie and Walter rode over to Mr.

Ledford's and returned with Silvia and Isom. They blessed the beautiful young mistress whose wealth had purchased them. Old Silvia begged so hard to go with her Miss Amy, that the next day, when Charlie, Walter and Amy started for Wilmington, Silvia accompanied them, while tears and smiles wreathed her old black face, the one at parting with Isom, the other in being permitted to go in search of her other "chile," as she called poor Norva.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE HALF-BREED'S REVENGE.

SOME two weeks after Walter and Amy had left Glen Park for America, the elder Hastings called on Lady Hester. He felt a desire to look on the face of his daughter without being known. It was a lovely May morning, and the sweet songsters of the trees made the soft morning air musical with their rich notes. As Mr. Hastings walked slowly up to the fine old mansion, he cast many an admiring glance at the beautiful home of his fair young daughter, and for a moment thought that this might have been his home, if he had acted honestly. All that was past now, so he wandered on up to the house.

Little Alfred was playing on the lawn, watched by old Susette. The beautiful child had a string around the neck of a small, Scotch terrier dog, which was trying to get away from him, and

which brought forth a merry peal of laughter from his red lips at its struggles. It did not escape until it saw Mr. Hastings, and then breaking from Alfred, it flew towards him as he was ascending the broad marble steps, and catching his hand suddenly in its sharp teeth drew the blood, and then ran away. An angry frown passed over Mr. Hastings' face as he lifted the great brass knocker.

In a short time he was admitted by old James, and shown into a pleasant morning-room, where he was soon joined by Lady Hester. A faint smile curled her lips as she came into the room and recognized her visitor. Mr. Hastings thought he had never before looked on such a splendid-looking woman. He rose at her entrance and held out his hand, but Lady Hester did not seem to see it, as she said, "Mr. Hastings, I have been looking for you to call for several days, and since my granddaughter and her husband departed for America, I have been most anxious to see you," and her great black eyes never left his face.

She sank into the nearest chair, and motioned

her visitor to be seated. Just then James came to the door with a scared, pale look on his honest face, bearing little Alfred in his arms. Lady Hester sprang to her feet, and said, "In the name of heaven, James, what has happened to Amy's child?"

"Nothing, I hope, Lady Hester," said James, hurriedly; "but little Alfred's Scotch terrier has become rabid; I have him secure now. As he comes out of one fit he goes into another; it is fearful to see him suffer, and the green froth issuing from his mouth."

"Kill him at once," said Lady Hester, taking her grandchild in her arms, as all the color left her face.

She glanced at Mr. Hastings, who sat with a look of horror on his pale face.

"Are you ill, Mr. Hastings?" she said.

Her visitor did not answer her, but said, "Can it be possible the dog is mad? He drew the blood from my hand as I came in, but I did not notice anything strange about him."

“I am sorry, sir; but I fear it is as James says, and if that is the case, you are a doomed man; and, knowing how badly you must feel, I will not try to torture you further, but will merely say, God is just, and punishes his law-breakers even in this world.”

Mr. Hastings looked at the speaker with white lips, and said, “What do you mean, Lady Hester?”

She answered, “Where is Mr. Hampton’s beautiful daughter, and where is my fair, sweet child, whom you decoyed from her home in Norfolk twenty years ago?”

“Why do you ask *me* for your child, madam? Did you not tell me she died years ago?” and Mr. Hastings’ knees trembled; for at every heart-throb of this man, the poison was spreading through his system. Lady Hester looked at him long and earnestly. She thought of her beautiful daughter so cruelly wronged, and of the feeling of revenge that had slumbered in her bosom so long; and looking at this pale, horror-stricken man, she said,



“There are some things in this world, Mr. Hastings, that once done, can never be undone; but you can make amends so far as to acknowledge your sin against my daughter, and tell where you and your son Lawrence have hidden Norva Hastings; I am confident she is not dead.”

A sickly smile played over his pallid face, as he said, “Lady Hester, I am too old to be frightened into making any acknowledgments against my will. This is a fine story, got up about a mad dog, to try and frighten me.”

Lady Hester arose, and gave Alfred into the care of Susette, and said, “Come with me, Mr. Hastings: we will see for ourselves.”

Old James was almost in the act of shooting the dog when they went out.

“Wait a moment, James: I wish to watch the dog for a while, to be sure he is mad.”

“There can be no mistake as to that, my lady, and I shudder to think what a narrow escape our little Alfred had.”

“Yes, Lady Hester, the man is right; the dog

is mad, and I must have medical aid at once," he said.

"Too late, sir: even if at any time there was a shadow of hope; for in a case of this kind your doom is sealed, sooner or later. It may be days, it may be weeks or months, but the end is bound to come," said Lady Hester, solemnly. "Not even your friend Dr. Hurst can save you."

Lady Hester and her visitor went back to the house, and Alfred's grandmother carefully examined him to make sure he had escaped the awful doom that hung over Mr. Hastings.

"This, sir, is the son of Walter Hampton and Amy Le Clare. They are now on their way to America, in search of Mr. Hampton, who has not been heard from since my granddaughter rescued him from Lind Hurst. It was reported he was dead, but as that is false, I feel convinced that you and your son have Norva confined in some place as bad, if not worse. Tell me where she is: and why you assumed the name of Le Clare to destroy my beautiful daughter."

After a little while, he said: "Lady Hester, why do you think it I that took your daughter from Norfolk?"

"Many things lead me to believe so. The description I had of your person from my daughter before her death, and the strange likeness there is at times between Amy Hampton and yourself, and when I first met you in America, I felt you were the man. When I told you the story of my poor Amy's wrongs, and you trembled, I knew, as well as if my Amy had come and told me, you were the man that called yourself Le Clare, and that you were the father of my beloved granddaughter. At one time I had planned a terrible revenge on you; but God has seen fit to take things in his own hands. How much wiser and kinder He is than we poor worms of the dust! My revenge in its bitterest form could not equal this horrid torture you must carry in your soul the few remaining days you will have to remain in this world."

Mr. Hastings trembled as he said: "Lady

Hester, I will tell you one thing, and that is all. Your daughter was my wife. We were legally married, and I will give you the marriage certificate, if that will be of any satisfaction to you. I did your daughter a great wrong when I told her she was not my wife, and when I deserted her as I did. As to Norva Hastings, she is dead. And now I will hold my daughter's son in my arms; then bid you good-morning. I came here thinking to see my daughter; but perhaps I will never see her. It is well, perhaps. She can have but little love for me," he said, gloomily, as he took Walter's and Amy's wondering child in his arms and pressed his lips to the little one's innocent face, and put him down. He looked at him for a time, then turned to leave Glen Park, but Lady Hester pressed him to stay beneath her roof; but he said he would go, and return at the end of a week.

He did so, and on the morning of the eleventh day, as he was making his toilet for breakfast, he was taken with spasms. Everything was done for him that was possible: but all to no purpose.

In three days, he who had caused so much suffering to others passed away. From the day the dog bit him until his death, his mind had been in awful dread and horror, and words could not express the fearful physical tortures he endured, knowing, as he did, what must be his wretched fate, the most horrible of deaths. It was not known where he spent the time after he left Glen Park, until his return, but Lady Hester supposed he went to Lind Hurst. After his death she had him buried with care; for he had been the husband of her daughter, and Amy Hampton's father.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

FOUR months have passed since Mr. Hampton was consigned to the tower at Castle Rook. Old Delgado and his wife had taken their departure for London, and father and daughter were left to themselves. Again, it is a night of storm and darkness, and never had the prisoners' prospects looked so gloomy as now; neither had tasted food since the night before, for there was none at hand, and they had been left to perish by starvation. As the storm rages in its fury, Norva slowly and with faltering steps goes to her father's side, laid her head on his knee, and said:

“Father, dear father, it will soon be over. Soon we will be beyond the reach of our cruel persecutors, soon free from human, but fiendish hands that have so cruelly treated us. No human aid can reach us. We are here alone,

weak and helpless, surrounded by a wall thirty feet high on three sides, and on the fourth one hundred feet to the dark sea that beats and moans so sadly. There is no escape for us from this horrible place, and no food; so, dear father, we must resign ourselves to our fate, and pray God to take us soon unto Himself, if it be His will. Oh, dear father! if you had your health and liberty in the dear old Mead, I could meet my fate almost without a murmur. But when I think it was my own want of proper judgment in making Lawrence Hastings my husband, whom, if I had studied well, I might have known was a villain, that has brought all this misery to our home, it makes me doubly wretched. My anguish, my punishment is more than I can bear!" and the thin form of the once beautiful Norva Hampton quivered with grief.

"There, my daughter," said her father, "do not reproach yourself. We were both deceived in Lawrence Hastings, but Walter was not, for he seemed to understand the man perfectly. As you

say, Norva, our fate is sealed, and we will not spend our few remaining hours in reproaching those who have doomed us to such a death. Ah, Norva! I hope soon we will be with your gentle mother. It seems to me that she is very near me to-night, and when I greet her, how can I tell her of your brother Walter, and of my great injustice to him for loving that beautiful, heroic creature, Amy Le Clare?"

He was going to say more, but Norva suddenly raised one hand and said :

"Hark, father! I heard some one knocking on the entrance gate."

He raised his head and listened. He, too, heard a knocking, and said :

"Some poor, belated wanderers who wish to seek shelter from the storm; but we cannot admit them."

"But," said Norva, "can we not let them know we are prisoners here, and get them to send us aid?"

"True," said he; "but those chains bind me



here, and I am too weak to raise my voice above the storm."

"Then I will try to make myself heard," said Norva, as she arose from her father's knee. She took one step towards the door but fell senseless.

The faint light of the candle shone dimly from the tower chamber, and the knocking became louder, until at last a portion of the high, massive wall gave way, but the inmates of the lonely tower chamber were unconscious of what was going on without in that dark and stormy night. When the early September sun arose over the lonely sea-girt prison, father and daughter lay unconscious that they were in a quiet little inn and surrounded by friends.

After a time each awoke and at a glance knew they were not at Castle Rook. Mr. Hampton was the first to make the discovery, and in a low voice whispered :

"Where am I?" and a gentle voice replied :

"With friends. Here, drink this!" and Charlie Field held a glass of wine to the old man's lips. He swallowed it, and then said :

“Where am I? Whose friendly voice is it I hear?” and his face lighted up with something of the old grand look that it used to wear as he stood on the banks of the river among his well-remembered mountains.

“Not now,” said Charlie, “but wait until you have partaken of some food. Then I will tell you all.”

Just then there was a low knock at the door. Charlie went and opened it. It was a waiter with some breakfast for Mr. Hampton.

“There, sir, is a cup of coffee fit for his Majesty. Those chops are browned to a turn, and those rolls are delicious. When these are despatched I will answer any questions you may put to me,” said Charlie, in a cheerful voice.

Mr. Hampton followed the directions of his kind nurse, often during the repast looking at Charlie with an inquiring and grateful look on his noble but careworn face. After he had finished his welcome meal he turned to Charlie and said:

“Charlie Field, in the name of heaven, how came you here? Where am I? and where is my poor daughter?” At the mention of Norva his soul seemed to go out to the young man who bent so tenderly over him.

Charlie’s face assumed a bright look as he said :

“I will answer your questions now. You are in the town of Penzance, surrounded with friends, and it is as well with your daughter as could be expected under the circumstances. Don’t become excited when I tell you that your son Walter is with his sister at this moment administering to her wants. We are in hopes that, in a few days, you and your daughter will be able to go to Manchester, and, shortly after, embark for the United States.”

Charlie Field then told him of the elder Hastings’ death at Glen Park. Mr. Hampton put his thin, trembling hands over his face, and remained in deep thought for a long time; then he called Charlie, and said :

“Please send my son to me; that is, if he can

so far forgive me, for banishing him from home and taking a viper to my bosom in his place, finally to sting me."

We will pass over the meeting of father and son, and hasten to the time when all were able to leave Penzance, although neither of them were very strong as yet; but the presence of Walter, Cliff Wilbern and Charlie Field helped to cheer them, and in a measure were instrumental in their rapid recovery. Mr. Hampton felt that soon he would tread the shores of his adopted country. Norva thought lovingly of her mountain home far away.

Walter had written to Amy of his success in finding his father and sister, telling her she might expect them any day.

Just as the carriage drew up at the gates of Glen Park, Norva turned to her brother, and said: "I am very anxious to see your wife, that precious boy of yours, and dear old Mammy Silvia," and the glad tears rolled down the speaker's pale, thin cheeks.

“There they are, sister.”

Norva looked in the direction her brother pointed, and a burst of admiration escaped her as she beheld the beautiful vision. Amy in her walking-suit, Mammy Silvia's dear old face, with great gold hoop earrings in her ears, and little Alfred in her loving arms, made a very pretty picture.

“God bless my loved ones,” said Walter, tenderly; “I have them all again.”

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

A NOBLE vessel rides the waves of the broad Atlantic; she is in mid-ocean, bound for New York. There is a little party seated together on her upper deck, watching the Indian summer sun as it seems to sink down into the bosom of the deep. This party consists of ten persons—namely, Mr. Hampton, who is fast regaining his health, and with little Alfred seated on his knee, Lady Hester Glenmore Spotswood, Charlie Field, Cliff Wilbern; there is also Walter Hampton, with his wife at his right, and his pale sister at his left, and old Mammy Silvia at a little distance.

“Now, I wonder,” she thought, “if there was eber an’ ole nigger as eber had three such chil’en as dem: Miss Norva, wid her pale, dark beauty, an’ eyes like stars on a soft summer’s night, an’ Miss Amy, wid her hair like gold an’ her cheeks

like apple blossoms, an' young Mars'er Walter—why, he beats de King of England all hollow. I saw de ole gemman wid deas eyes of mine, while we was in London, an' he can't begin to hold a candle to de chile dis ole nigger took in her arms an' put de first clothes on. And now he, too, has got a baby-boy—just like he was at his age."

"Look, brother," said Norva, straining her eyes far ahead; "is that not a sail?"

"I think it is," said he, looking in the direction of her gaze.

The soft breeze fanned Norva's cheeks, and a faint dash of color stole into her pale face as she took the glass from her brother's hand, and watched what appeared to be a mere speck on the horizon. She watched it with a strange eagerness, until twilight settled over the deep. After a time, a faint light tinged the starry heavens, which grew brighter and brighter each moment.

"What is the meaning of that bright light?" asked Mr. Hampton.

"I think it is a burning vessel," Cliff Wilbern

replied, with a pale, troubled look, "and, if so, God help those on board."

By this time, the two vessels were so near each other that the cries for help could be plainly heard, as many persons leaped into the sea, where some found a watery grave. A large number were saved by the crew of the vessel on which our friends were passengers.

After breakfast, next morning, the stewardess came to Lady Hester, who was on deck, and asked if she and the other two ladies would not prepare the body of a beautiful girl for burial, as they were the only ladies on board.

"Certainly," said Lady Hester, sadly: "we will be in the cabin soon."

Going up to her granddaughter and Norva, who were walking arm-in-arm, she made known what was wanted of them below. Walter saw them to the cabin, where they were met by the stewardess, who conducted them at once to the state-room, where the cold, still form lay.

"When did the young lady die?" said Lady



Hester, turning down the white sheet and exposing the beautiful face to view.

“She was dead when taken from the water,” replied the stewardess.

Norva by this time had entered the room, and had caught a glimpse of the cold, marble face. She threw her hands up, exclaiming, “Oh, heavens! it is Octavia Stanley;” then turning away, she fell fainting to the floor.

Walter, who was still lingering in the cabin, saw his sister fall. He hastened at once to her side, and gently lifted her in his strong arms and bore her to her state-room; then calling Amy, he said, “Darling, what is the matter with Norva?”

Amy looked very sad, as she said, “Dear Walter, have you no idea who lies dead in the next room?”

“No,” said he, as he pressed his sister’s cold hands between his warm palms.

“Then,” said Amy, “I will tell you: it is Octavia Stanley; and you may know how her presence, either living or dead, would affect dear

Norva," said Walter's wife, sadly, as she kissed the fainting girl's lips.

"Yes," said Walter, turning pale, "I understand; but where is her partner in crime?—where is Lawrence Hastings?"

In a short time his questions would be answered. Norva soon recovered from her fainting fit. Her large black eyes were strange and wild, as she said, "Dear brother, am I dreaming, or did I really see Octavia lying cold and still in death?" and a shiver ran through her delicate frame.

"It is reality, my darling sister; the vengeance of God has overtaken her."

Lady Hester just then tapped at the door, and said all was done that was necessary.

At ten o'clock, when the sun shone brightly, and a gentle gale was blowing from the east, all the passengers assembled to witness one of the most sad and solemn of all burials—a burial at sea. Our party of friends were standing together near the pale form that soon was to find a last resting-place beneath the waves. The captain had opened

his book to read the solemn burial rites, when a tall, ghastly figure stepped up, and knelt at the side of the dead girl. For a moment he remained thus, then arose, and turned his face away. The captain went on with the services, and soon all that was left of the earth earthly of the beautiful and erring Octavia Stanley was consigned to the great sea of waters.

Again the tall form that had kept his back to our party of friends, turned and faced them. There was a look of demoniac triumph in the face, as he fixed his eyes on Norva, and said :

“And so, Mrs. Hastings, we meet again. It seems that you have outwitted me at last. All of you are on your way to Hampton Mead.”

Norva was as pale as death, and could make no reply, and as all the rest seemed too much astonished to speak, old Silvia drew near and said :

“Yes, Mr. Hastings, through me they has outgeneraled you. I always told Miss Norva I would get eben wid de debil, an’ so I has. It was me as led Mars’er Walter where to find my

beautiful young mist'ess; de night on which you made at me an' I dragged you to the earth with me, I learned Miss Norva was at Castle Rook; but I was old an' thought I would not let you get this knowledge from me. So, when Mars'er Walter an' my young Miss Amy came back to 'Merica, I gib my young mars'er the info'mation, an' so, Mr. Hastings, we is all here, on our way back to de Mead."

At this moment Mr. Hampton stepped forth, as if to speak to the man that had robbed him and his daughter of liberty so long. Walter stood somewhat in the rear, with his wife and child near him. He was pale with excitement and agitation at beholding his old enemy again, but, remembering the occasion that had assembled them on deck, he restrained himself, and waited for his father to speak. Hastings cast his eyes over the deck; near him he discovered a huge piece of iron; he stooped and picked it up, while a grim smile overspread his face; then looking earnestly in Amy Hampton's face, while a change came over

his look—a change of feeling, a softened, tender expression that no one had ever seen before, he said :

“Farewell, sweet, beautiful sister, you will enjoy the great wealth of the Hamptons, while I, your brother, will sleep in mid-ocean with the only woman I ever loved,” and as he spoke he leaped into the sea.

The passengers were horror-stricken at the sight. Norva, who had been so deeply wronged, and who had suffered so much at this man’s hands, fainted in her father’s arms, while Amy turned to Lady Hester, as if asking an explanation of this man’s words, “My beautiful sister;” what did it mean? Lady Hester understood the appealing look, and said :

“Yes, dearest Amy, that poor demented creature was right: you are his half-sister; his father married your young mother under the name of Le Clare. Here is the marriage certificate,” and the speaker handed Walter the folded paper the elder Hastings had given her at Glen Park. Amy

sank on her knees, while her face was bowed, as she prayed.

Mr. Hampton and Charlie Field went below with the still fainting form of Norva. The captain gave orders to have boats lowered to recover the daring young man that had sprung overboard, as soon as he should rise to the surface, but they did not find him. He and his only love still sleep beneath the ocean waves, until they shall be called at the great day to answer for the deeds done in the body.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE SHADOW IS GONE.

**T**WO years have passed away since Norva Hastings saw her husband sink beneath the ocean waves to rise no more. Again it is September, and at dear old Hampton Mead. Again she is to be a bride: this time all the members of her family are delighted with her choice. No doubts fill her brother's mind as he sees her lean on the arm of the noble Cliff Wilbern. Well might father and son trust Norva's happiness to this excellent and eloquent divine. The soft autumn breezes steal over mountains, rivers and valley, as those two are united in a marriage of hearts as well as hands. No influence save that of pure love implanted in each heart binds them on this happy occasion. And old Mammy Silvia, who is looking on, turns to Isom—her husband—and says:

“Tings is as dey should be, an’ I is glad I has

lived to see de day when Miss Norva is wedded wid her equal. I always did say it should have been; an' so it should, an' so it is."

"Yes, Silvia, things is as they should be," said Wilkes McCord, as he was passing by and overheard old Silvia's remark to her husband; "they make a splendid-looking couple."

In a few days the bride and groom left the Mead for Wilmington, where Mr. Wilbern had charge of a church. Mr. Hampton had been loth to give his daughter up. But she who had first won Walter's heart as Amy Le Clare, threw her soft, snowy arms around his neck, and said:

"Dear father, I know your loss is great, but let me be a daughter to you during Norva's absence."

The proud, noble face of Mr. Hampton looked down on the beautiful woman, and taking her delicate hands in his, he said:

"God bless you, Amy, my daughter, mother of Walter's beautiful boy, in whose veins flows the blood of the Cherokees. I love and bless you," and the white head bent and his lips pressed the fair brow of Walter's little savage wife.



A few years later Lady Hester went to rest with her ancestors, and Amy became the lady of Glen Park and its magnificent surroundings, but still she could not leave Hampton Mead.

Almost before she or Walter was aware of it, little Alfred was of age, and went over to Glen Park, where he was born, to look after the property. At that time he was betrothed to his fair cousin Caroline Wilbern. Soon he returned to claim his bride. On his father's death Walter became owner of Hampton Mead.

A few years ago, we spent several weeks with him and Amy, and fished in the lake where Norva had sat under the shadow of the statue of Diana, when the great shadow of her first marriage began to fall so thickly around her. We drank from the clear crystal spring where Walter first met his love. Although nearly fifty years have passed since then, she is still the *idol* of his heart. Mrs. Walter Hampton presented us with a piece of handiwork done by her grandmother, Lady Hester, the half-breed. A shadow no longer hangs

over Hampton Mead. It continues to be one of the loveliest spots on earth.

When we were at the Mead we had many a long talk with old Silvia. She said she was over one hundred years old, and still loves to tell how she got "eben wid de debil," years ago.

"Dat, honey, was before my old man Isom died; when I was a young an' handsome woman, afore my har got white as a sheep, an' my ole eyes got so dim. But we will all get ole, honey chile, if we live long enough," said she, sadly.

Now we will say good-bye to Hampton Mead, as it looked to us as we drove away from its hospitable doors: with the early summer sun kissing the blue waters of the lake, and gilding the grand and lofty mountain peaks with its brilliant rays; Walter, tall and commanding, with hair white as snow, standing on the door-steps with Amy by his side, each waving us a fond adieu.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbern are there also, and no shadow rests on Norva's face. A tall, lovely brunette stands near her; this is her grand-

daughter, also Walter's and Amy's. She is Alfred's daughter, and they call her Lady Hester. Alfred and his wife had gone to Glen Park, and we had not the pleasure of seeing them; but we hope when we go to Hampton Mead again to find them all gathered beneath its old and ample roof.

THE END.



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"UNDER THE WILLOWS," by Mrs. Elizabeth Van Loon, author of "A Heart Twice Won," and "The Shadow of Hampton Mead," undoubtedly shows that to compose an original and striking work of prose fiction is not among "the lost arts," about which a great orator used eloquently to discourse some years ago. Most of the characters are American, but the action shifts from the New World to the Old—from this country to Europe, France, and Italy. This is a strange mixture of reality and romance. Characters the most contrasted are brought together in the strangest and the most unexpected combinations. Incidents the most startling are adroitly narrated with so much *vraisemblance* that the reader will be puzzled how to take them; yet the improbable eventually turns out to be the truth, and what might be anticipated from their results does not occur. In these days, when society novels, historical novels, professional novels, literary novels, tourist novels, and sensational novels are very numerous, it is well, if only by way of relief, to have a story in which the writer, following the aboriginal example, so carefully "covers up her tracks," almost from the very first chapter, that the ingenuity of even practised readers is kept on the *qui vive* until the wholly unexpected winding up. "UNDER THE WILLOWS" is a romance of unbroken interest, in which the wild and wonderful are more largely developed than in most compositions of its class. In this respect it eclipses "A Heart Twice Won," and "The Shadow of Hampton Mead," preceding and popular works from the same pen.

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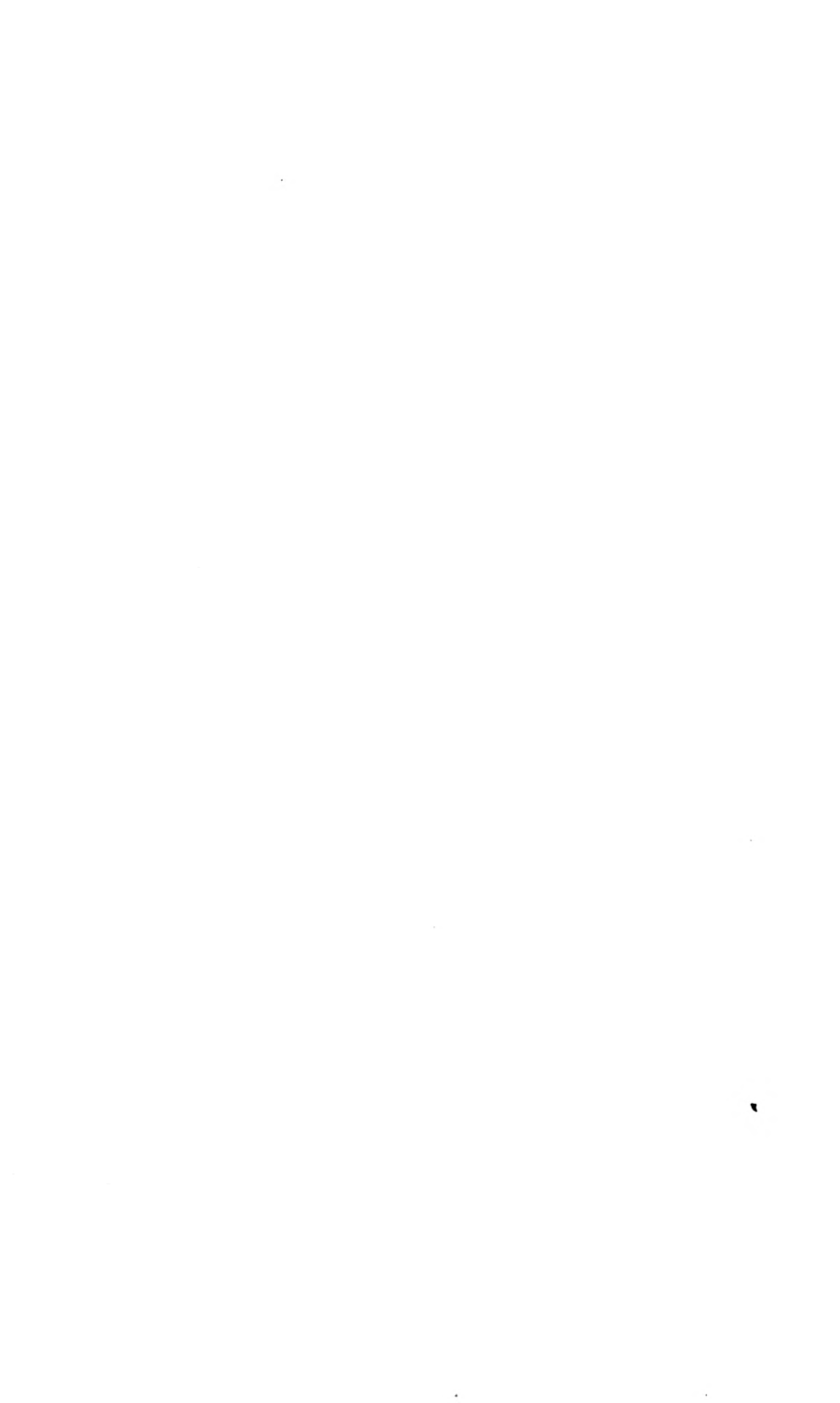
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